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ROGER ZELAZNY'S

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Reviewed INSIDE:

Cybermage
IndyCar Racing II
Future Shock
Earthworm Jim
The Beast Within
Warhammer
Allied General
SWAT
Pool Champion

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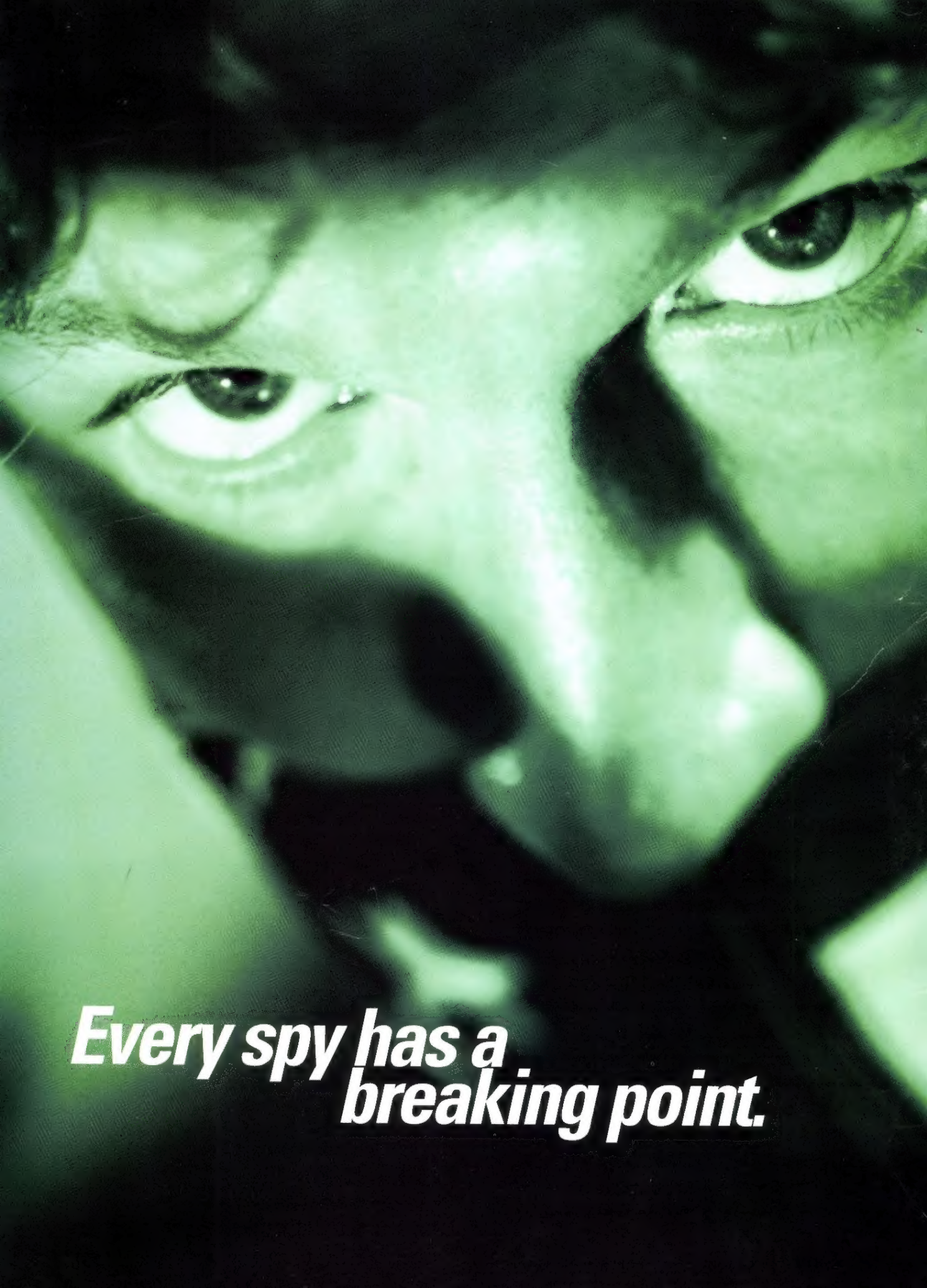
Volume 5, Issue 8



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THE GAMING MARKET



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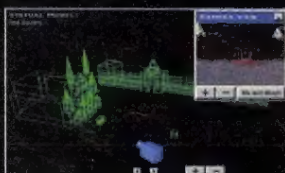
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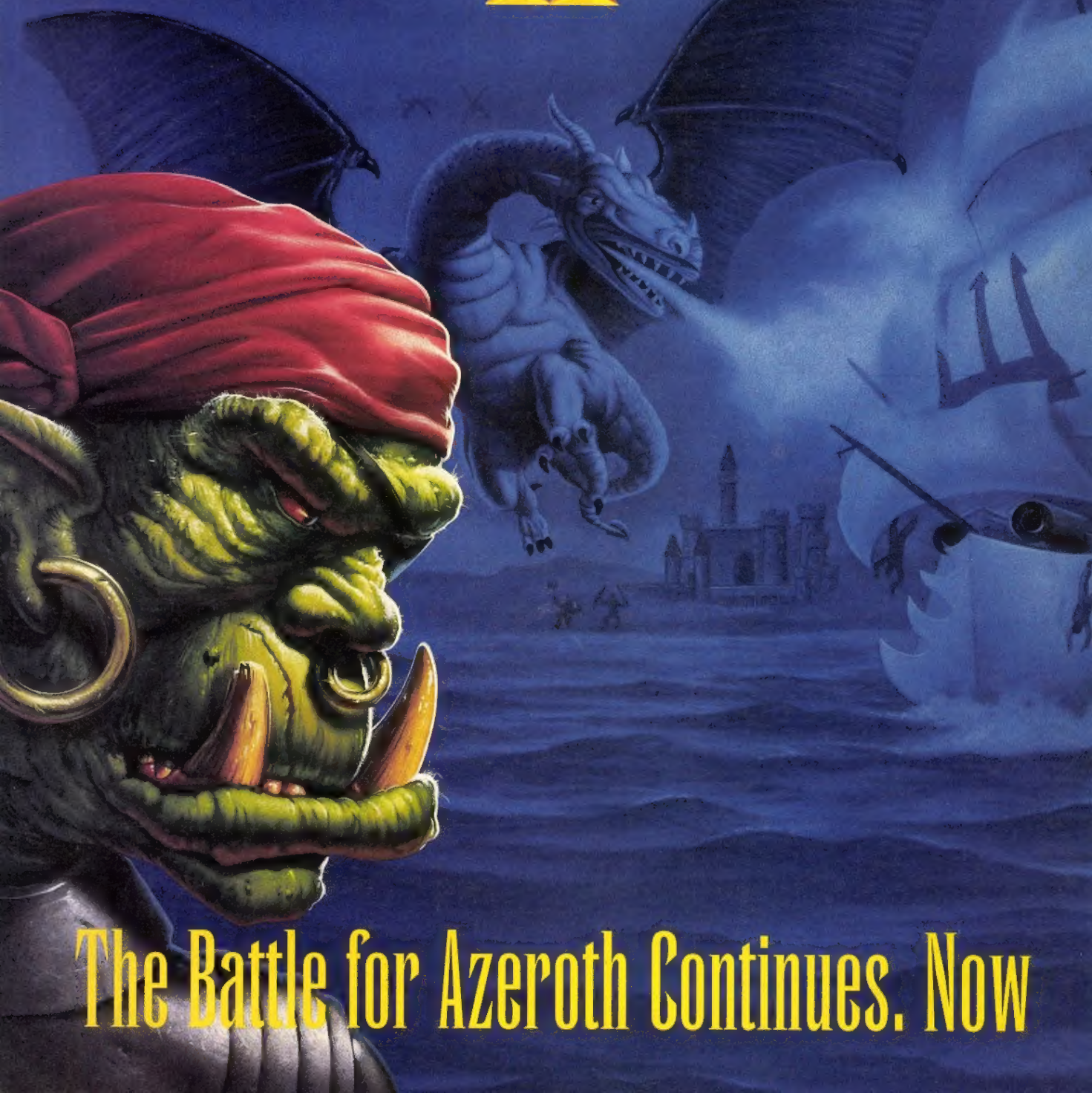
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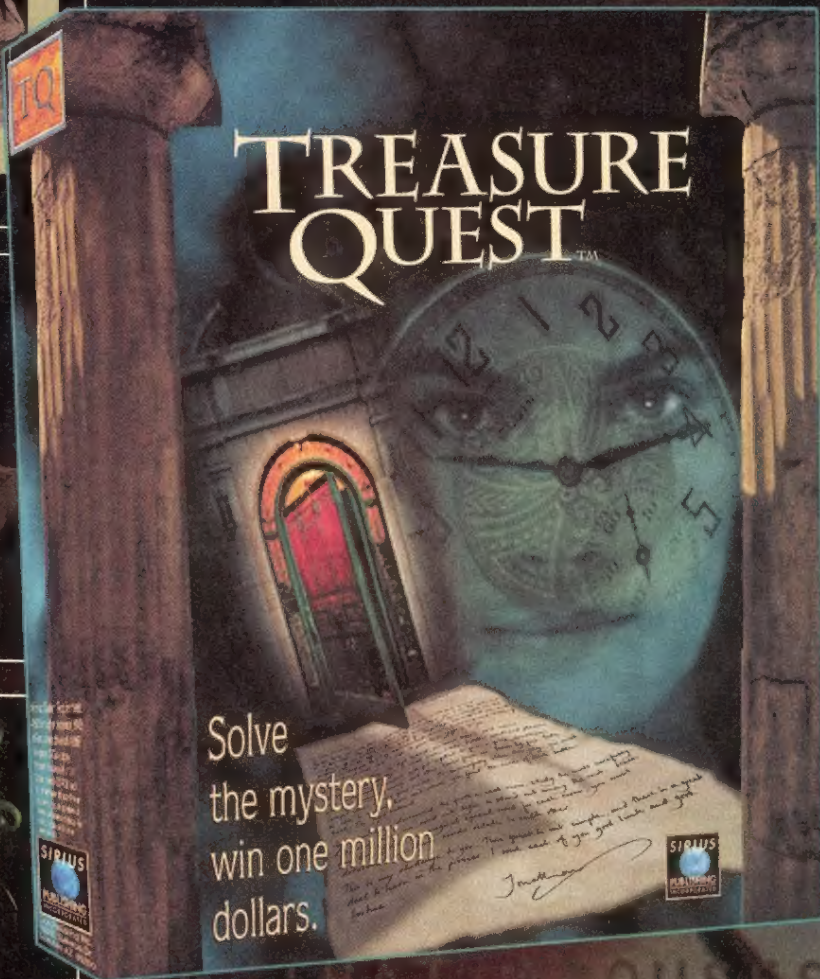
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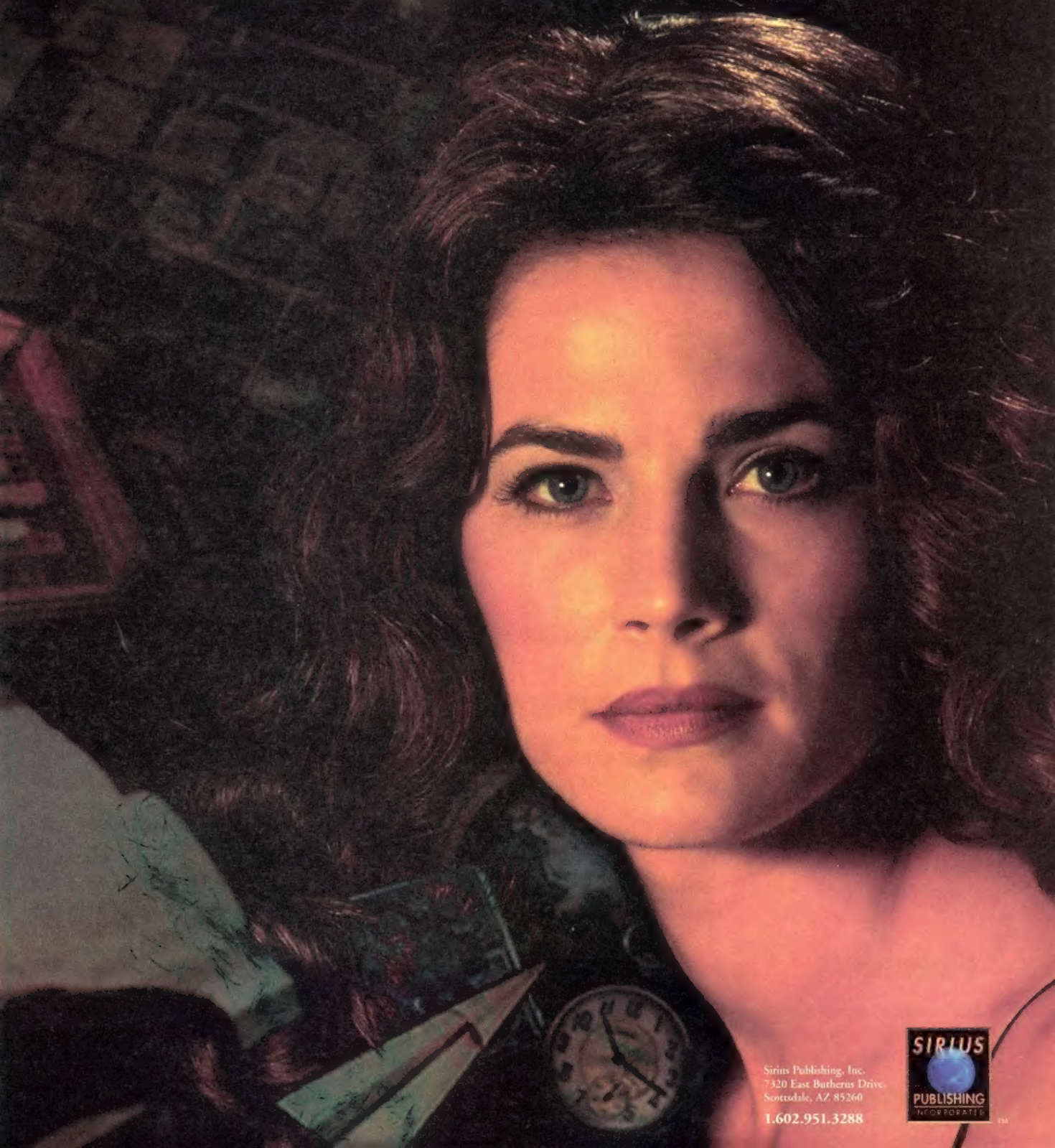
Look for Treasure Quest at your favorite computer software retailer March 22, 1996, 12:14 a.m.

<http://www.treasurequest.com>

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Contents

Initialize

12

While there is an upside to all of the software on the market lately, there's a potential downside as well.

Letters

20

Every now and then a reader writes in to defend the reviewers on what they have to say about a product.

News

24

Winter CES in Las Vegas proved to be even less exciting than projected. Does this spell the end for the show?

Reviews

32

Allied General, Chronomaster, IndyCar Racing II, The Beast Within and Warhammer all make their presence known.

Hardware

88

Just when you thought you were safe from upgrading again, NEC releases a four-CD changer for the PC.

Add-Ons & Info

96

If you can't get enough of listening to music without electricity, check out the MTV Unplugged CD-ROM.

Previews

125

Massive sequels this month including Red Baron 2, Star Control III and Civilization II along with others.



Chronomaster.....48



WarCraft II.....Page 136



Allied General.....Page 36

Strategy

136

Help for those trying to create fun scenarios in WarCraft II and hints and tricks for survival in Zone Raiders.

Game Over

146

Just when you thought the clans could work out their differences comes the final battle in MechWarrior II.

In the Bag

This edition of the hottest demos of the best software around is headed by Interplay's action mega-sequel Descent II.



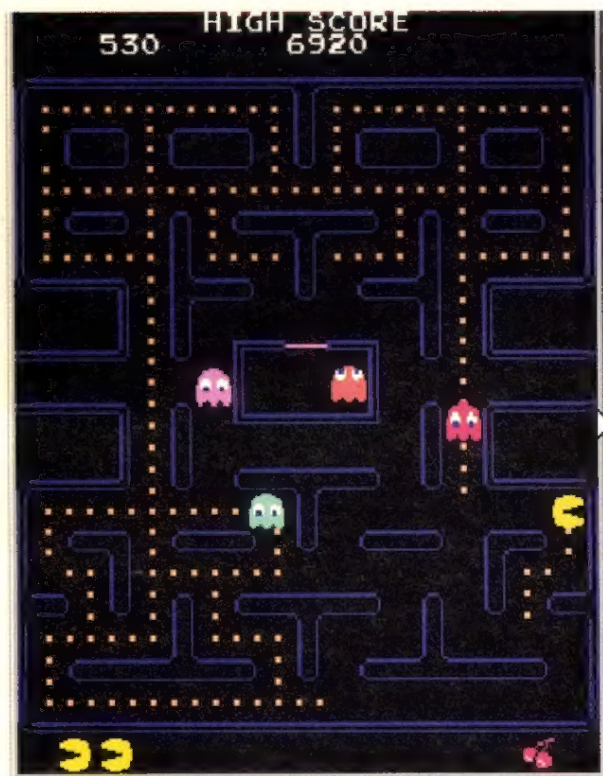
Civilization II.....Page 125



IndyCar Racing II.....Page 68

12038 rpm 128 mph 3rd gear

Features



Microsoft Games

106

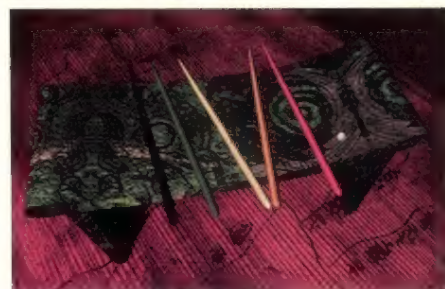
From classic arcade titles like Pac-Man and Galaxian to the most modern and technically accurate military simulations, Microsoft has decided that software can be fun.



Interview

118

The tomb of the First Emperor of China's Middle Kingdom lies unexplored. CGR talks with game designer Luyen Chou about what he thinks might be there, why he thinks so, and why this was the inspiration for his upcoming title, Qin.



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QUANTUM QUERY

There was a time not too long ago when the computer entertainment software industry was more or less a cottage industry. It was sort of like being in the comic-book business—you knew what was going on and were fairly well in tune with things or you knew nothing about it and cared even less. Things have changed. As I mentioned last month, there are a lot more companies producing game software for the PC now. There are companies that have never produced anything more fun than a racy annual report that are entering the game market. For the most part, this is good for the industry. But, while every cloud has a silver lining, every silver lining has a cloud as well. Making gaming big business gives us more games to play, but it also means that people

QQP the freedom to worry about creating newer and better games without having to deal with the hassle of paying the electric bill. Let ALG worry about the suit stuff and let the guys at QQP take care of making the fun. It was a formula that seemed to be working. Perfect General II was the best release from QQP in a year and more titles were coming. So the software was good. On the other side, bills that had been outstanding for months if not years were finally starting to get cleared up. Everybody seemed happy.

Until American Laser Games shut down QQP. Not sold them, not consolidated the New Jersey offices of QQP into the New Mexico offices of ALG. They liquidated them. Didn't even sell off the pending properties like *Lost Admiral 2* and *Awful Green Things from Outer Space*. Just shut them down. According to a source from QQP, American Laser also shut down the arcade division of the company and didn't even give the workers there a day's notice. How sudden was this? The latest QQP releases, *Battles in Time* and *Card Player's Paradise* have catalogs with upcoming QQP releases listed until the middle of 1996.

There were assets at QQP even if the company wasn't pulling its weight for American Laser Games. The name and the production house could certainly have been sold to someone else—I find it hard to believe that a company like Electronic Arts or Spectrum HoloByte wouldn't want an established software developer with a decent reputation in its stable. But no matter—it was probably a sounder financial decision to simply axe these two divisions and carry on.

But that's where the suit-think idea comes in. It simply wasn't the right choice to make, even if it was the one that was the most fiscally responsible. I know the people at QQP pretty well. They'll be back under a different name. They may still have trouble producing a good manual or interesting box art. They may still have trouble paying that annoying phone bill. But they will produce the sort of games that made QQP's reputation. ALG's actions have only delayed them for a year or so. They'll be back.

What steams me the most though, is the final piece of evidence that this was a heartless, corporate decision. QQP and the arcade division of ALG were terminated on Dec. 7 (Pearl Harbor Day, how appropriate). Could it be more classless to cut two divisions and send all of those people packing during the holiday season? Merry Christmas, here's your severance pay.

This industry used to be about having fun. You did what you could to show your consumers a good time. If you broke even, okay. If you made a few bucks, good for you. Now it's all about the bottom line. Produce, make money, even if it's derivative crapola, or pack your bags. Maybe someone should remind us that it's still supposed to be entertainment.

Steve Honeywell
Editor



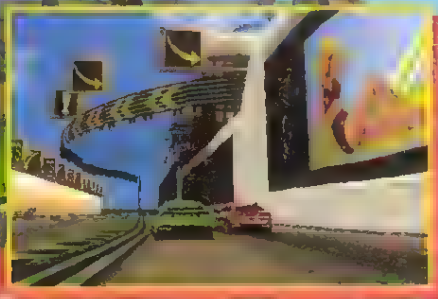
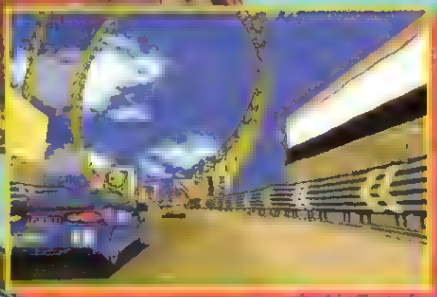
Battles in Time will be one of the last games from QQP. The company no longer exists in any form.

starting acting like it's big business. They start thinking with their wallets instead of with their heads and hearts, and that means that people get hurt. Here's a case in point.

QQP was a company that had a number of reputations. One reputation was that it produced, as a rule, pretty good software. Remember *Lost Admiral*, *Perfect Generals 1 and 2*, *Merchant Prince*, *Solitaire's Journey*, etc.? Another reputation QQP labored under was that its manuals were routinely awful. They were. They didn't say much and what they did say was often incoherent. The company's third reputation was that it didn't pay its bills as regularly as it should have. So it was seen as a generally good thing when American Laser Games went ahead and bought QQP. Many people, myself included, figured that this would give

BRACE YOURSELF!

"The loop just munched the green car! Here's our chance... I'm going in... over!"



Actual play screen shots shown

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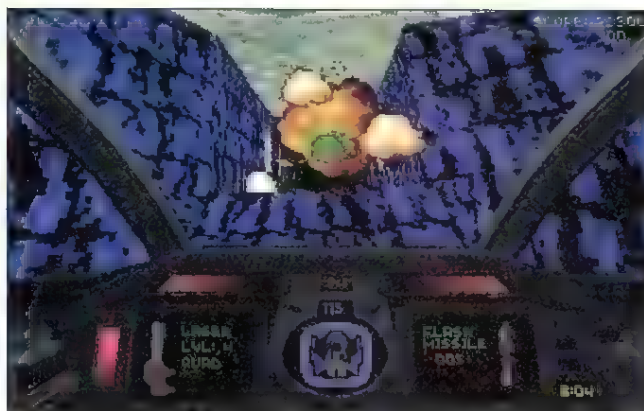
gameDISC

USING YOUR gameDISC™

To use your gameDISC you must have an MPC-compliant PC running Windows 3.1 or higher and an SVGA card monitor running 640x480x256 colors or higher.

To get started, insert the gameDISC into your CD-ROM drive. Click on the FILE menu and select the RUN option. Type in the letter of your CD-ROM drive and a colon, then select browse. Several options will appear. Click on GAMEDISC.EXE, then click "OK" twice.

Select the title you'd like to see a demo of. You will receive a brief description of the game or service and will have the opportunity to install the demo on your system. The majority of the demos can be installed from Windows. Those that cannot can be installed from DOS. The majority of these demos should be run under DOS or Windows 95.



Descent II

Descent from Parallax and Interplay has proven to be one of

the most exciting games of the last year or so. Not content to sit on



their laurels, the Parallax team has taken the Descent concept back to the drawing board and developed more complicated levels and maps, new enemies and entirely new challenges for you to face and defeat.

As before, you will be entering a series of convoluted mine tunnels. In each, you will need to locate the various enemies and destroy them. Along the way, you can also find some human survivors in the mines and pick them up to rescue them. Eventually, you'll need to find the exit as well as the main reactor. Once the reactor is blown, you'll only have seconds to make it out of the mine before you are caught in the massive explosion. Certain areas may require keys to allow access.

While Descent II is playable with the keyboard or a two-button joystick, a more sophisticated four-button joystick with a hat controller is strongly recommended.

REQUIREMENTS

386/40 or better (486 or Pentium rec.), DOS 5.0, CD-ROM, 4MB RAM

CONTROLLER: Joystick, Keyboard

AVAILABLE FOR: PC and Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Parallax/Interplay

TECHNICAL

SUPPORT: (714) 553-6678

Rebel Assault II



Once again, the Empire is threatening the Rebellion with extermination. It is up to you, as Rookie One, to join the battle against the forces of evil and win a major victory for the forces of good. Using the premise of the Star Wars movies, Rebel Assault II picks up where the original game left off—a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away.

This time, the Empire has created a new weapon that could prove to be just what it needs to completely destroy the Rebellion. You are the only one who can stop them, and you'll have to fight against the Empire in a number of different ways. You'll go into outer space and

shoot down wave after wave of enemy TIE Fighters. You'll fly missions where even the slightest miscalculation may be your last. You'll also have to spend some time on

foot fighting against Stormtroopers, and you'll even have to disguise yourself in an enemy uniform! Excellent animation highlights the action. May the Force be with you.

REQUIREMENTS

486/50 or better, 8MB RAM, 2x CD-ROM

CONTROLLER: Mouse

AVAILABLE FOR: PC and Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: LucasArts

TECHNICAL

SUPPORT: (415) 507-4545

NUKE and NUKE+

Want the latest information on computer and video games, movies and comic books? Look no further than NUKE! You'll find reviews of the hottest games, information about the latest in science-fiction and action movies, comic books and much more. Exclusive interviews and reviews of products as well as in-depth articles on the things that matter most to you. You'll also find exciting contests and giveaways exclusive to the NUKE site.

If you are running Windows 95, you can simply click the button and you'll be taken to the NUKE interface. If you are not yet running Win95, you can find NUKE on the Internet at the coordinates <http://www.nuke.com>.

The Microsoft Network is up and running, but finding the latest information on most topics is still a matter of browsing through

the Internet until you find the site you want. Not any longer! With NUKE+, you can have the best of the Microsoft Network right and your fingertips.

NUKE+ is the premier news service on the Microsoft Network devoted to the latest information about video and computer games, movies, television, comics and much more! NUKE+ offers visitors to MSN a direct link to NUKE, Sendai Interactive's popular site on the World Wide Web and offers live chats with some of the movers and shakers of the entertainment industry including the editors of *CGR*, *Cinescape*, *Electronic Gaming Monthly* and *HERO Illustrated*, plus bulletin board message threads, exclusive contests and much more!



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gameDISC

PROBLEMS WITH YOUR gameDISC™

If you experience trouble getting a particular demo to run, you will need to contact the technical support services for the respective company. The technical support phone numbers for these companies are provided in the description boxes on these pages. We are unable to provide technical support assistance for any problems you might experience with a particular demo.

If you can't get anything to work on the CD and/or receive error messages that indicate that the CD is unreadable, please contact CGR at (708) 268-2498 for a replacement CD.

Arcade America



All of Joey's monster pals have been scattered across the country due to a massive dynamite explosion. While normally this wouldn't be anything more than an annoyance to Joey and his buddies, the massive concert at Woodstock is about to start. Joey needs to collect his friends and get back in time for the show.

Arcade America features 10 different locations in the United States that are used as back-grounds for the various games Joey must complete to find his

friends. As you compete against the clock, you'll pick up clues that will help you locate Joey's pals. Just make sure you don't take too long, or the concert will be over before you can get there.

7th Level claims to have used over 10,000 individual frames of animation in creating this title, so you can rest assured that it will look as good as the 7th Level games of the past.

REQUIREMENTS

Windows, 4MB RAM, 2xCD-ROM, SVGA

CONTROLLER: Mouse

AVAILABLE FOR: IBM and Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: 7th Level

TECHNICAL SUPPORT: (214) 437-5837

The Earthlink Network

The Internet is a confusing place. There's a lot going on, and everybody seems to know their way around, except for you. Earthlink has a way for you to get going.

Simply install the software onto your system and dial up the people at Earthlink. Once your account has been established, you'll have access to e-mail and Netscape Navigator, an excellent Internet browser. And you thought this would be hard!

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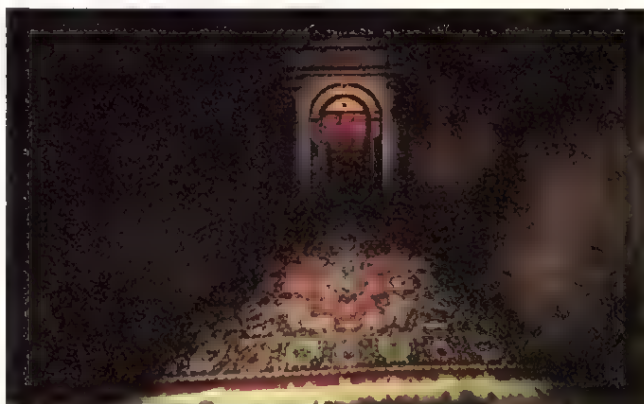
Windows, DOS 5.0+, 4MB RAM, 9600 baud modem

CONTROLLER: Mouse

AVAILABLE FOR: IBM and Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Earthlink Network

TECHNICAL SUPPORT: (213) 644-9500



Treasure Quest

Sirius Software is betting \$1 million that you can't solve Treasure Quest. That's how much money will be going to the first person to make it to the end of the game.

The story is simple: A professor has died and his will states that the first student able to solve the mystery of his mansion will be granted \$1 million. Thus you, as one of the students, must enter the mansion and search out the various puzzles. You will also need to find a number of clues, some of which

may be contained in almost any part of the game, including the songs on the soundtrack. The final version of the game will come with a copy of the professor's will, which also might contain a few clues for the savvy solver and an audio CD.

Treasure Quest stars Terry Ferrell from *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, and in addition to the contest, features a full multimedia gaming experience. Good hunting.

REQUIREMENTS

486SX/33, 8MB RAM, 4xCD-ROM

CONTROLLER: Mouse

AVAILABLE FOR: IBM and Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Sirius

TECHNICAL SUPPORT: (802) 951-3208



Angel Devoid

A bizarre accident has left you with the face of a criminal, Angel Devoid, the very man you are pursuing. Your life has suddenly become a deadly game of cat and mouse, and you are no longer the cat. To survive, you must infiltrate the futuristic world of Neo-City. Here, death can strike at any time

and from virtually any quarter. You'll have to keep on your toes.

To make matters more difficult, the only people who can help you are the thieves and fiends who think you are Devoid himself. Plan who you trust carefully.



REQUIREMENTS

486/66, DOS 5.0, 8MB RAM, 2xCD-ROM SVGA, sound card

CONTROLLER: Keyboard, Mouse

AVAILABLE FOR: IBM and Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Mindscape

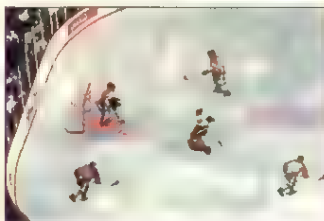
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: (415) 898-5157

Wayne Gretzky Hockey

Can't get enough of cold steel on ice? Is any day without slapshots and cross-checks an empty one? If so, you'll want to check out Wayne Gretzky Hockey.

This title features all of the hard-hitting hockey action you would expect from a game that bears the

name of one of the greatest players of all time. Change your lines and move in for a one-timer in the crease or try to exploit a weaker opponent on a power play. Either way, the action is up to you.



REQUIREMENTS

486/50 or better, 8MB RAM, SVGA, sound card

CONTROLLER: Keyboard, Joystick

AVAILABLE FOR: IBM and Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Time Warner

TECHNICAL SUPPORT: (408) 433-3999



FANTASY GENERAL

Command the
army of your
dreams!

PC DOS CD-ROM
for IBM and
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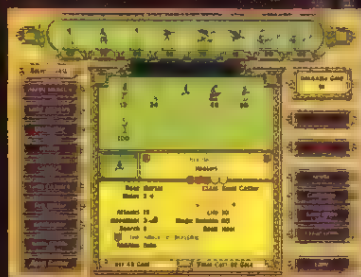
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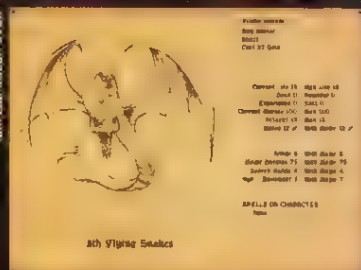
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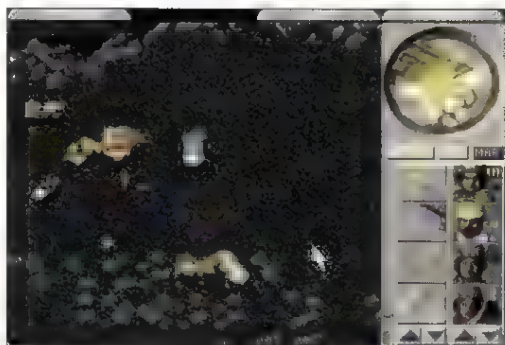


IBM 256-COLOR SVGA



For Game Rating Info: call 1-800-775-9792



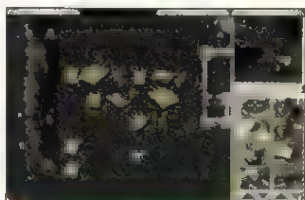


Command & Conquer

One of the most important games of 1995, Command & Conquer offers players a realtime military simulation environment where every second counts. You won't have the luxury of sitting back and calmly plotting your strategy. Your enemy will be actively seeking you out and trying to wipe your forces off the board with extreme prejudice. To keep this from happening, you'll have to keep a watch on virtually every aspect of your forces.

Fortunately for you, whatever side you pick has the forces necessary to eliminate the other army. The Global Defense Initiative has more powerful units, including grenadiers and medium tanks, but the Brotherhood of Nod has speedy units like the light tanks and units of massive destruction potential like the flamethrower troops. Either side is capable of winning any given scenario.

In each battle, you will need to come up with the best tactics to get rid of the other army. Many times, this will involve creating a base of operations that will allow you to create new units and troops to lead the battle. However, you won't always be so lucky. In some cases, you'll have to make do with what you have. Good luck.



REQUIREMENTS

486/66 or better,
8MB RAM, 2xCD-ROM

CONTROLLER: Joystick, Keyboard

AVAILABLE FOR: IBM and
Compatibles

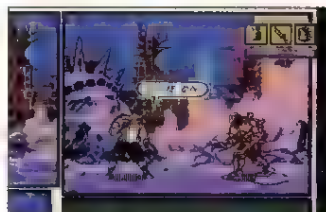
DESIGNED BY: Westwood
Studios/Virgin

**TECHNICAL
SUPPORT:** (714) 833-1999

Comix Zone

It's every comic-book lover's dream—and nightmare! You, as Sketch Turner, are the creator of the wildly successful Mortus, a comic-book character with incredible power. In fact, he's so powerful that he has drawn you into the comic-book world for a showdown!

Now, you've got to face your own deadliest creation in a battle of wits and skill. Can you defeat this



demon from your own mind and his army of comic-book creatures or are you doomed to a life inside comic panels? Only the toughest gamers will find out!

REQUIREMENTS

Pentium/60 or better, 8MB RAM,
SVGA, 2xCD-ROM

CONTROLLER: Mouse

AVAILABLE FOR: IBM and
Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Sega of America

**TECHNICAL
SUPPORT:** (415) 862-3064

Frankenstein

Tim Curry stars in this exciting CD-ROM that places you in the body of Dr.

Frankenstein's mad creation. You have just awakened to discover that the life you knew is over. Your last thought was at your execution—your punishment for a life of crime. Your brain has been placed into the body of an organic construction created by a mad genius from the tissues of human bodies. This, at

the moment, is all that you know. Your task is to discover the reason for your existence and the purpose behind Dr. Frankenstein's delving into sciences better left alone. Tackle these questions if you dare.



REQUIREMENTS

486/33 or better, Windows 3.1/Win 95,
8MB RAM, SVGA, 2xCD-ROM

CONTROLLER: Joystick, Keyboard

AVAILABLE FOR: IBM and
Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Interplay

**TECHNICAL
SUPPORT:** (714) 553-6678

America Online

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SYSTEM Button indicates the available operating environments for a given selection. DOS (for PC), WIN31 (for PC), Macintosh.

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POSTAGE DUE

COMPUTER GAME REVIEW
1920 Highland Ave.
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We Often Get

criticized about some of the reviews we run since no two people ever agree on anything all of the time. We figure that that's pretty much okay—we expect it. Other times, readers write in to defend the positions we have taken, as this month's first writer does.

Defending Your Review

Several writers to your and other magazines have said that they did not like the reviews given for Thunderscape. The game received generally good review[s]. Overall, the game is a good RPG that grows on you as you play the game.

What is wrong with the game? The map is only usable if you rotate it and change the walls from solid to outline and back—in other words, a lot of work. The graphics are drab and dated—the graphics in Eye of the Beholder III, another RPG developed by SSI three years ago are superior. With the drab colors some special or important items cannot be seen easily on the game screen—hint: Adjust the contrast and light intensity of your monitor. There does seem to be a wide diversity of monsters. The monster animations are dated and all humanoid-type monsters pose in a stupid bent-at-the-waist stance during combat. The game world is HUGE with many areas empty. The game theme, the use of steam and magic, is never fully realized except for one small area of the game world. The music. The game interface does not work well for those areas that have to be explored by running and jumping between platforms and shelves—these shelves and platforms need to be larger or the sensitivity of the controls need to be adjusted. I found three areas where the SSI hint line did not give the correct information. NPC interaction is limited.

After all that, why do I like that game? I had to play a third of the game before I found myself liking the game and playing it late into the night. The ability to greatly adjust the difficulty of the game gives the player great control over the play balance. The warfare and magic interface is about the best I've seen for an RPG. The Mechmage theme was great when they used it and has great potential. [There's n]o upper limit to a character's skill or ability

level—at the end my characters were at level 192. Most characters can develop good abilities in both weapons and magic. The magic visuals and effects are good and varied. Some strong weapons are available after the first 1/3 of the game. None of the puzzles are impossibly hard.

There is one great cheat/Easter egg in the game. At the start of the city there are two giant gongs. After

Software Off the Port Bow

As a computer gamer who broke into the hobby when the TRS-80 was the system of choice, I have had much time to consider the topic of software piracy. I feel my point of view has yet to be presented in your magazine. So far, we have heard from the whiny illiterate pirate whose illogical argument does nothing to



Thunderscape has taken hits from readers while getting praise from critics. Which is the real story?

the gates have opened, if the north gong is hit all characters in your party are given 5,000 experience points. That's each time the gong is hit, guys and gals!

Ted Maynard
Akron, OH

I GUESS THAT WOULD

explain why your characters achieved such an amazingly high final level

Additionally, it's nice to hear from someone able to admit enjoying a game that has some flaws. It's too often the case that gamers get fed up with a title because it isn't perfect. Check out a gaming section on the Internet sometime if you think I'm full of it. Games, even the good ones, get flamed a lot more often than they get praised. As reviewers, the same is true. Still, it's all a matter of opinion

further the cause, the 13-year-old who saves every penny of his allowance just to buy a game and the editor of a certain unnamed computer game magazine who is out of touch with reality and likes to sit on his moral high horse. [Can you repeat that? I'm up too high to hear you! -ed]

Let me do my best to shed some light on certain issues.

1. The pirate's motivation—I can't speak for every pirate, but for the majority of these people, piracy is an "attitude" not an "act." Just like hardcore Harley Davidson bikers consider their bike their lifestyle—not a machine, so too do hardcore pirates consider piracy a lifestyle of sorts. 2. Question: "Why don't they just buy them like everyone else?" Answer: "They do, don't worry—they do." Every serious pirate that I know puts every nickel and dime they can get

their grubby little hands on toward computer stuff. Let's face it, when is the last time you saw someone pirate a motherboard and distribute it? Who keeps a large portion of the modern industry alive? Which leads me to my next point.

3 NEVER believe any report where someone says, "The software industry lost \$XXXXXXX.XX to piracy this past year." There are some simple reasons why this makes absolutely NO sense. For one thing, most software out there is so lackluster that it lasts about 10 minutes on any pirate's hard drive. Also, since pirates dump every penny they have into hardware, the software companies GAIN more customers (albeit in a roundabout way). For an example, if I GAVE away 100 copies of Doom, I could then say, "Gee, if I had charged \$100 a game, I would now have \$10,000!" This is called faulty logic because as we all know, if I charged \$100 a game, I would never sell 100 copies. Such is the case with piracy: Who said that "10 million" lost to piracy would ever be spent on software and moreover, who said that that "10 million" ever existed?

4 Software companies are INCREDIBLY greedy. Back when it was a rarity to own a computer, software carried a high price tag to reflect the number of copies required to sell in order for the company to break even on the product. Now that home computers are commonplace, we STILL haven't seen a reduction in price! It's all supply and demand and the customer is getting ripped off here... A comment was made in CGR that Wing Commander IV has a budget of \$10 million so, therefore they will have a hard time making that money back at \$30 per game. Consider movies where you pay \$5 to see a movie with an \$80 million budget! Your argument doesn't make as much sense anymore. (BTW, let me know where I can buy new releases for \$30 and I'm there.)

It should be said though that the fact that piracy is against the law is undebatable. What a mad world we live in where one person can drive at 150 mph and endanger human life and get away with paying a small fine and another person goes to jail for the simple reason of distributing information.

All this and I am a programmer by trade. Sheesh, what is this world coming to?

Kancer
via Internet

P.S. I would ask you to print this in your magazine but then again, I think it makes too much sense to be

printed...keep pumping out those letters from the 13-year-old whining pirate geeks. It serves your purpose better

GEE, YOU'RE RIGHT. AN intelligent argument like yours is too much for an out-of-touch-with-reality editor like me. And yet, on the other hand...

1. Yep, I'm sure you're right but having a particular attitude doesn't justify the behavior. Thieves can have any attitude they want, but it's still thievery. Also, hardcore bikers aren't generally stealing their bikes.

2. Which is wonderful for hardware manufacturers. But, tell me the last time EA or Spectrum HoloByte put out a piece of unpiratable hardware. And hardware sales do drive software sales on the console machines, but not necessarily on the PC.

3. Anyone (even you) can make figures lie. Don't believe the figures if you don't want to, but don't delude yourself into thinking that you are helping the market by pirating software. You claim that because pirates spend money on hardware, software companies gain customers. This is called faulty logic. Your argument makes as much sense as this: Because I buy a lot of milk, other people are buying more cheese.

4. Duh...really? This is a business. The idea of a business is to make money. Smart business people charge what the market will bear. (BTW, let me know where I can go to non-mainline first-run movies for \$5 and I'm there.)

Additionally, I don't see a lot of computer games having the ability to make the \$2+ million that *Batman Forever* did in its first week. The market is smaller, the costs are higher, it's called (wait for it) SIM-
PLE MATHEMATICS. Also, I don't know of a lot of people who like a game so much that they rush out and buy another copy. There is no equivalent to cable or video rental in the PC industry. Also, I expect more than a 90 minute or two-hour experience from a game. It's a different market, and comparing the two is comparing oranges and grapefruit—both citrus and both fruit but not mistakable for each other.

Finally, piracy is not distributing information. Piracy is copyright infringement. A game is not a photocopy of a product and you don't have

the right to distribute it.

Listen carefully, you and all other piracy knuckleheads. Take five minutes and think your argument through because you are building houses on sand and your sanctimonious babble is giving me hives.

Numbers from Cyberspace

1) This magazine is awesome! I have had a subscription to CGR for more than three and a half years and not once have I been disappointed. I've read every issue from front to back (except for Game Over, but that is a whole other issue).

2) Hey people! Why do you think it's called piracy?

3) Do you know anything about Warlords 2 Deluxe? I love Warlords 2 and I am wondering if I need to spend the money on this or do I basically have the game with just my original version? Also, when is Command & Conquer 2 coming out?

4) The other day I was looking back through my library of CGR magazines when I ran across the February 1993 issue. In it, there is a list of all the games reviewed and their score. I think there were other issues like this but I can't find them now. Are you planning on making another list like this? It would be a great thing to have when I go computer game shopping. I'm sure new subscribers would also really appreciate this.

5) What do you know about writable CD-ROMs?

6) How 'bout a review of funky screen savers?

Eli Burak
via Internet

SOMEDAY I REALLY WILL do a Postage Due section with no numbered letters. Until then...

- 1) Thankee
- 2) 'Cause they all wear eyepatches?
- 3) I recommend it unreservedly. The new scenarios are cool, as are the new armies and the new artwork. The real seller here is the network play and (for me personally), the scenario editor. Tres cool.
- 4) Our 1996 Buyer's Guide does contain such a list. The problem with doing something like that in the magazine is that in type of this size, it takes up about nine pages—that's a lot of space. It should appear on our Nuke site by the time you read this as well.
- 5) Many of them are gold.
- 6) Check Add-ons regularly.

Bad Judgment

I've always enjoyed looking forward to obtaining the newest issue of Computer Game Review and poring over the many informative, readable articles and previews of upcoming game releases. To me, CGR has always stood out when it comes to content and style. Often, I would wade through many "other" computer game magazines on the rack at bookstores, bypassing them all until I got to the latest issue of CGR. Your in-depth and reliable coverage of the myriad spectrum [sic] of computer software titles seems so complete that to purchase one of the "other" computer mags would be redundant, and incomplete; CGR "says it all."

This is the first time that I'm writing to you—and most likely my last. After all that irrelevant, necessary verbiage of the first quarter-mile-long paragraph, I'll get to the real point of my letter: I'm writing to tell you that this is the last time I will ever buy an issue of Computer Game Review.

Where do you get off showing, in full-color, a nude woman being dis-



If you loved Warlords II, the Deluxe version is worth the price of admission. If you never played Warlords II, stop reading this and go buy it!

"SERVICE...

a story **so fabulous**
it'll make yer tail spin
and leave you singing

HALLELUJAH.

Registration is so sickly
easy I almost didn't
believe it.
Give these cats a call."

rated A. —The Net Magazine 9/95

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emboweled [Nov. 1995]. The first thought that came to my mind (honestly) was: A group of 11-15-year-olds, huddled together in a classmate's bedroom after school, gawking at the very same photo, remarking, "Aw, cool! Check that out! That's fat!" My point, however you wish to take it: There's nothing cool nor fat about seeing a woman being eviscerated. Look...I'm not a prude, nor a moralist, nor a religious zealot. I'm not writing to preach any "gospel truths" or "thou shalt nots." I'm writing to criticize your judgment for printing such a graphic photo. I'm almost 30, and having seen pretty much everything, I've become so accustomed to life's gorefest so vividly displayed every day on TV that I'm rarely shocked anymore. Affected, yes; shocked, rarely. Affected in a way that I wince at the thought of a "no-holds-barred" expansion in the development and marketing of more violent, more graphic, more intense software being made available to anyone, regardless of age—which is what is occurring now...I wonder when, if ever, there will be a limit (precluding censorship) of some kind reached when everyday person will shout, "Enough is enough!" and be heard.

I was curious and more immature at one time too, blurted out crass comments like that maybe-not-so-fictional group of preteens and teenagers I depicted earlier. But I'll be honest and say that I was shocked when I saw that photo on page 208. Despite the fact that it is a special effects prop, it looks disturbingly real—too real to be viewed by young readers. I didn't expect to see anything so intensely graphic in such a (supposedly) well-thought out magazine. Don't tell me that inclusion of that photo was overlooked during editing—that's bulls***. If a game has extreme graphics and/or violence and is intended for a mature audience—not pimple-popping, pud-knocking, pubescent preteens with IQs of a pork rind, why show it

in your magazine for all to see? If it was done intentionally, to bolster interest in the game prior to its release and to encourage that concept more popular than GOD [sic]...well, not only are the designers of Ripper warped, so are you for showing that photo. That is why I no longer wish to buy CGR

Furthermore, I and I'm sure there are many other concerned individuals out there, especially parents, who have noticed a disturbing trend developing, namely: A proliferation of "adult" advertisements being included in many computer gaming mags. I understand that thing about sponsorship and all, but these ads have no place in a magazine whose reading audience encompasses the younger crowd. If an adult wishes to delve into such soft-"hardcore"ware, that is his/her moral, decision. Even ads by Sega and Nintendo that push gaming systems on unwary kids are pressing the limits, showing bikini-clad beach bunnies, for example, hopping up and down at the conclusion of a car-racing game—the winner's "prize" if one is to interpret that immature image correctly. A guy may have the dream of "winning" a beautiful woman as a bride or girlfriend; I know I have, too. However, women are not "prizes" in a sense that they are not "objects" to be won or bought—nor gutted like a dead animal—even in a game. You definitely stepped over that boundary line of decency with that one...

I realize one irate reader refusing to buy your magazine and writing an unfavorable letter of admonition will not put

you out of business tomorrow and will have at most, negligible impact. I'm also probably the only one to address this matter. I always thought I could pick up CGR, relax while reading it and enjoy it. I never thought I would have to spend time writing a letter stating that I was so upset by what I saw...

Carl F. Bednarczyk
Edison, NJ

WHO WOULD'VE EVER
thought that the first letter I would ever receive from the town of my birth would be one like this?

Was the picture in question graphic? Sure. Was it a "prize" as Mr. Bednarczyk opines? No. It's a special effect picture from an autopsy sequence in the game. Nothing more, nothing less. As a part of the game, I felt it had merit.

I also find it staggeringly funny that someone like Carl here can go on and on for pages about how dastardly Take 2 and CGR are for running that picture (believe me, I don't have the room to print the whole letter) but get no feedback regarding the picture of the large man with his intestines falling out on the table as shown below. This is okay? This is less obviously a special effect?

I won't say that we didn't ponder the wisdom of running that picture. It was a conscious choice and faced with the same decision again, I'd make the same choice. If we want to adequately cover the software we need to show pictures that adequately describe the software. Of course, Carl will never see this letter or the response to it.



Offensive or newsworthy? Does printing a graphic picture help define the game, or does it simply quell the desire for violence?

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You will be next!

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XENOPHAGE

ALIEN BLOODSPORT

FormGen
INCORPORATED

Developed by Argo Games
Published by Apogee Software, Ltd.
Distributed by FormGen



WWW Site (<http://www.apogee1.com>)
CompuServe (Keyword: APOGEE)
Software Creations BBS (508) 388-7036





No Show

Winter CES and computer gaming are now mutually exclusive.

You may not have heard this yet, but in terms of computer entertainment, the Consumer Electronics Show is dead. The Winter CES in Las Vegas was the wake, and there were pitifully few mourners from the gaming industry in attendance. Most of those scant few who did attend were not on the show floor, opting instead to rent hotel suites away from the convention itself, offering up some new software for viewing but staying well away from the thinning crowds. While there were some highlights in terms of product, there was little to see in general and even less in the specific. The general consensus from the game industry is that Winter CES was the last CES for gaming. After all, there's always E³ to look forward to. The biggest news from Winter CES is that there was no news to report.

There was a time when the Consumer Electronics Show was the highlight of the computer industry year. The summer and winter conventions showcased new games and new hardware, but if January's CES in Las Vegas was any indication at all, it may be that the com-



New World Computing continues to explore the realm of strategy gaming with the futuristic gang-warfare-across-the-city game *Chaos Overlords*.

puter industry and CES have fallen out of love. Some WCES watchers even predicted much lower than expected foot traffic falling from 120,000 in 1995 to an estimated 90,000 this year. The show as a whole was down. Estimates aside, the people who really know, the cab drivers, commented that the traffic was well below that of past years. One cab driver commented that since the traffic had dropped off so sharply, he thought the show was only running two days. Another

sure indication in the realm of PC gaming is that there were notably few evening receptions held by PC game companies. All in all, Winter CES was a big disappointment for those looking for any new product.

And yet, CES churns on. Almost as if to make up for the lack of a second show last year, there are three CESs planned for 1996. In addition to the Las Vegas show in January, there will be a show in Orlando, FL in May and a third show in September in Mexico City.



Avalon Hill's *Wooden Ships and Iron Men*, with its solid strategic base and beautiful animation, proved to be one of the highlights of the show.

However, it is unlikely that the gaming community will be in attendance at either of these shows.

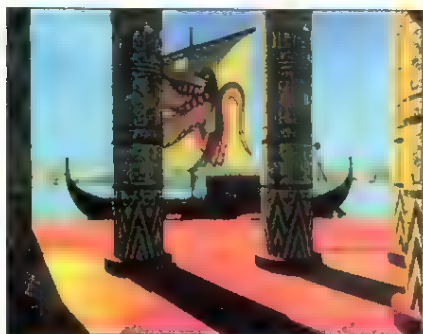
A big part of the reason that the Winter show was down this year is the same reason that last Winter CES offered little. With the show coming so close behind Christmas, most of the game companies have shipped their big titles of the year. Those games that missed have generally already been talked about, and new projects are usually so nebulous that there can be little discussion on them.

Naturally, there were a number of exceptions—new games planned for the first or second quarter of this year. Many of them, like *Star*

Control III from Accolade and NCAA Championship Basketball from GTE can be found in this month's Preview section. Other appear on these two pages. Still others, like *Free Enterprise: City of Industry* from Tsunami, are still too

numbers. With the success of *E³* and the already established track record of Comdex, the desire for any CES, winter or summer, is gone.

**- Steve Honeywell
and Steven Greenlee**



GTE's *Time Lapse* will offer players archaeological exploration mixed with surrealism. The hieroglyphics on the columns are the real thing, by the way.



Sony/Pygnosis showed *Assault Rigs* at the company's meeting room.

nebulous to have had much to show. And with major players Electronic Arts and Spectrum HoloByte not in attendance, there were few companies with the presence to dominate the show.

With the poor showing at CES, one can only wonder about the potential of the *E³* show scheduled for May in Los Angeles. Hopes for this show in the gaming community are high indeed. There were reports at CES that *E³* has already been booked—companies that have not yet planned their show floor space are now unable to purchase room on the convention floor.

Additionally, it appears that the entertainment software industry, deciding that one show per year isn't quite enough, will start attending Comdex in greater



Codie Nominations

Kicking off the somber festivities of the Winter Consumer Electronics Show was the finalist nominations for the Codie Awards, sponsored by the Software Publishers Association. Codies Coordinator Sara White of the SPA says there were over 900 nominations for Codies this year, nearly a 50 percent increase over last year. White says this year's categories have been revamped to reflect the rapidly changing marketplace. Also, she says that this year's nomination window changed. It had been for all software in a calendar year and now that has been changed to a November to November year. This is the 11th Annual Codie Awards and is open to all software publishers regardless of whether they are a member of the 1,200 strong SPA. A partial list of nominees follows:

Best Adventure/Role Playing

Full Throttle—LucasArts
In The 1st Degree—Brøderbund
Oregon Trail II—MECC
Phantasmagoria—Sierra On-Line
Stonekeep—Interplay

Best Action/Arcade

3-D Ultra Pinball—Sierra On-Line
Battle Beast—7th Level
Dark Forces—LucasArts
F/X Fighter—GTE
Hexen—GT Interactive

Best Sports Program

3-D Table Sports—Time Warner
APBA Presents Baseball for Windows with Ernie
Broadcast Blast—Miller & Associates
IndyCar Racing II—Papyrus Design Group
Quarterback Attack—Digital Pictures
Virtual Pool—Interplay

Best Strategy

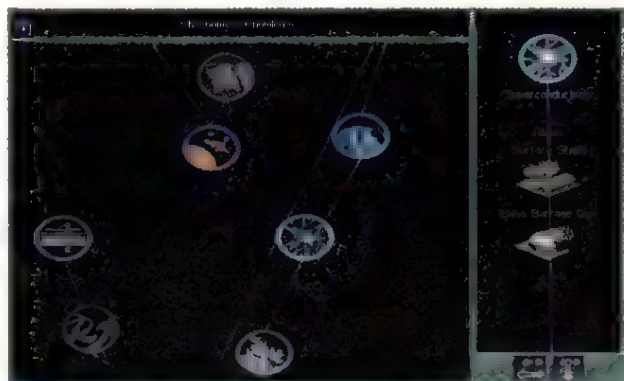
Ascendancy—The Logic Factory
Command & Conquer—Virgin/Westwood
Jewels of the Oracle—DISCIS
Monopoly CD-ROM—Parker Brothers
Zoop—Viacom New Media

Best Overall Multimedia Production

A Passion for Art—Corbis
In The 1st Degree—Brøderbund
Le Louvre—BMG Interactive
Passage to Vietnam—Against All Odds/Interval
Research/Ad Hoc Interactive

Best Debut of the Year

Apache—Interactive Magic
Ascendancy—The Logic Factory
EasyPhoto Version 1.0—Storm Software
Flight Unlimited—Looking Glass Technologies
Time's Up—The Fresh Software Company



Among the Codie hopefuls is Ascendancy, which is up for several awards.



Papyrus' IndyCar II, while just recently released, was able to nab a nomination for best sports simulation.

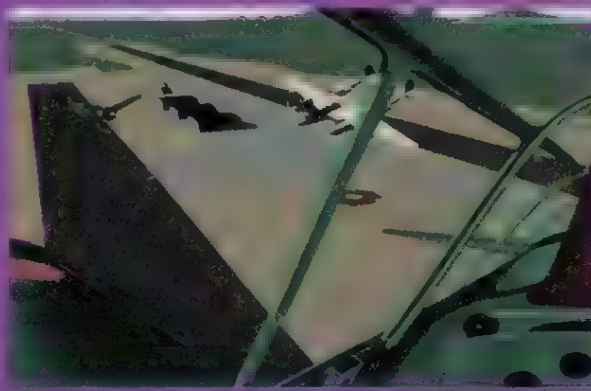
ICI teams up with Concentric in wake of split with Domark

ICI says it has found a new home for their line flight simulation formerly known as Confirmed Kill. In the wake of the falling out with former partners Domark in the project, ICI says the air combat game, now called WarBirds, will roost on the Concentric Network, one of the country's leading network on-ramp providers. Concentric will become the game's preferred gateway and will provide dial-up access, co-located host services and customer service to WarBirds pilots. Henry Nothhaft, Concentric CEO, says, "Our relationship with ICI will greatly enhance the network gamer's experience by leveraging the technological advantages of Concentric's top-notch dial-up services with a worldwide game."

ICI's Robert Salinas says, "WarBirds offers the most realistic simulated air combat experience to date. The Concentric Network allows gamers to fully appreciate that experience." That experi-

ence is a free download from ICI at their World Wide Web address of: <http://www.icigames.com>. Concentric customers do receive a price discount. ICI says it has found a new home for their line flight simulation formerly known as Confirmed Kill. In the wake of the falling out with former partners Domark in the project, ICI says the air combat game, now called WarBirds, will roost on the Concentric Network, one of the country's leading network on-ramp providers. Concentric will become the game's preferred gateway and will provide dial-up access, co-located host services and customer service to WarBirds pilots. Henry Nothhaft, Concentric CEO, says, "Our relationship with ICI will greatly enhance the network gamer's experience by leveraging the technological advantages of Concentric's top-notch dial-up services with a worldwide game."

software is a free download from ICI at their World Wide Web address of: <http://www.icigames.com>. Concentric customers do receive a price discount.



STONEKEEP

AFTER FOUR YEARS IN THE MAKING,
A BUDGET OF OVER FIVE MILLION
AND THE TALENTS OF MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED INDIVIDUALS...
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Step into the mystery and the magic of Stonekeep. As you traverse dark corridors, treacherous subterranean sewers and enter the realms of fairies, magic and the living dead, you'll be drawn into a quest more powerful, more realistic and more consuming than anything you've ever imagined. The detailed storyline unfolds at your command as you find yourself wielding weapons of metal and magic, battling disembodied foes, rescuing your allies and liberating a massive dragon from bondage. At stake is nothing less than your mortal soul. Stonekeep lives up to the Interplay slogan — "By Gamers, For Gamers." It's the kind of game we've always wanted to produce and the kind of game we've always wanted to play. It looks fantastic, sounds incredible and it tells a great story. It's also a heck of a lot of fun... and after all, isn't that what games are all about?



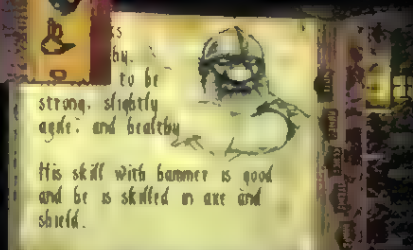
Hollywood special effects, heart-pounding music and 3-D effects will draw you into this epic adventure.



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Microsoft Mum on New PC

Electronic Engineering Times magazine reports in their January 8 issue that Microsoft is working on a new ultra-low-cost personal computer. In the published report, *EET* says documents obtained by them refer to the new PC as "Simply Interactive PC" and it would be a streamlined Windows-based machine geared toward entertainment, Internet and communications uses. What's more, *EET* quotes sources that say the PC is being designed to potentially compete with the much talked about \$500 Internet-access PC.

EET Managing Editor Alexander Wolfe writes, "The PC Microsoft envisions is not a simple, stripped-down platform, rather the 'Simply Interactive' is intended to emphasize Microsoft's ambitious plan to clean up or unify much of the software surrounding its Windows 95 and Windows NT operating systems."

According to *EET* the Simply Interactive PC will be a collection of open specifications including a new family of 32-bit Windows drivers capable of bringing advanced multimedia functions to an x86-based system rather than a product from Microsoft.

The new system would drive the current Windows 95 system using both 16- and 32-bit software until next year when an all new, all-32-bit Windows 95 is released. *EET* does quote Carl Stork of Microsoft's personal systems division. He says "Anything we do until we say it publicly is highly speculative. We reserve the right to change our mind." However, there is some comment to this idea as Microsoft has trademarked the "Simply Interactive PC" name.

id finds Quake publisher

id Software's Quake maybe one of the most highly anticipated releases to come around in some time. GT Interactive is counting on this fact. GT has secured the worldwide publishing rights to Quake, which means that GT will publish the Doom heir on PC and Macintosh platforms as well as porting it over for the 32-bit and 64-bit console platforms. Quake's release is still pending on the PC.

GT CEO Ron Chaimowitz says, "We believe Quake will be the industry's most significant title this year and we are thrilled to be bringing it to game players worldwide." Chaimowitz explains they plan to support a fall launch of Quake with a "sizeable" high-profile marketing campaign. There are also sizeable claims already being made. id Business Manager Jay Wilbur says, "Quake will do to the gaming world today what Doom did two years ago—set a new standard for computer gaming." Quake touts true 3D environments and texture-mapped polygonal characters. It will also use client server technology so there can be multiplayer modem and network play. In addition, Quake will have an all-new core technology—the first time an id title has been created with new technology since the 1993 release of Doom.

This isn't the first time id and GT have teamed up. There were agreements between the two for *Wolfenstein 3D*, *Doom II*, *The Ultimate Doom*, *Doom II* for the Macintosh and most recently, *Hexen: Beyond Heretic*. id, ever shrewd, retains shareware version rights as well as rights to full versions of Quake bought directly from id.



Sirius Offers Real Treasure

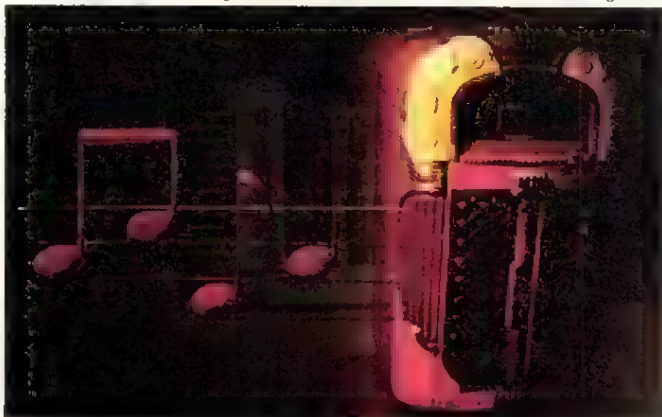
Best known for the 5-Ft. 10-Paks of CD-ROM software, Sirius Publishing has announced the

release of a new CD-ROM title called *Treasure Quest*. While the game will feature the same sort

of game play and action of a more traditional adventure title, there is a significant difference. With *Treasure Quest*, players have a purpose besides finishing the game to play for. The first person to solve the overall mystery and correctly contact Sirius with the answer will receive a \$1 million prize.

Treasure Quest is slated to be released on March 22 at 12:14 a.m., which, according to Sirius representative Mike Weiss, may or may not be a clue to the final solution. In fact, adds Sirius president and CEO Richard Gnant, "every aspect of *Treasure Quest* is a potential hint."

While the premise of the game has players searching the mansion of a recently deceased professor, the idea for the game came from an actual treasure hunt. The idea came from a book called *Masquerade* that was released in England about 15 years ago. The book gave hints that eventually led readers to the location of real buried treasure, in this case, a gold rabbit statue. Until the rabbit was found, the entire U.K. was galvanized in the search. Naturally, Sirius Publishing is hoping for the same sort of reaction with *Treasure Quest*.



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AND THE 11TH HOUR

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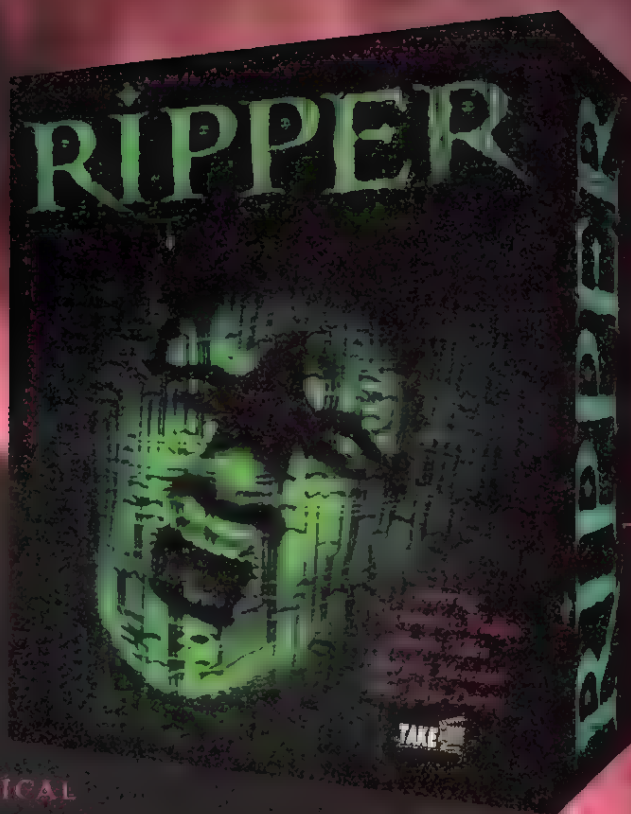


- Featuring the music of Blue Oyster Cult
- State of the art special effects provide unparalleled realism
- 6 CDs stuffed with ground-breaking gaming
- 4 different endings allow for extensive replayability
- High resolution graphics and a beautifully-rendered 3D world bring the adventure to life
- Over 35 interactive puzzles and complex sequences to challenge even the hardcore gamer
- Also starring: Jimmie Walker, Taber Walker, David Patrick Kelly, and Ossie Davis

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AND A BONE-CHILLING TALE,
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REVIEWS



The Warhammer universe makes its first appearance on PC platforms!

THIS MONTH'S GAMES

Allied General by SSI	36
Tempest 2000 by Atari	44
Battles in Time by QQP	46
Chronomaster by Capstone	48
Cybermage by Origin	52
Romance of the Three Kingdoms IV by Koel	54
Battleground: Gettysburg by TalonSoft	56
The Beast Within by Sierra	58
S.W.A.T. by Sierra	62
Unnecessary Roughness 96 by Accolade	64
Earthworm Jim by Activision	66
IndyCar Racing II by Papyrus	68
Terminator: Future Shock by Bethesda Softworks	72
Pool Champion by Mindscape	74
Warhammer by Mindscape	76
Greg Norman Golf by Grolier	78
The Lost Souls of Tong Nuu by Sony	80
Island Casino by GT Interactive	80
Ice & Fire by GT Interactive	80
PBA Bowling by Bethesda	81
Tang Chi by Capcom	81
Jack the Ripper by GameTek	81
The Real Deal by Mindscape	84
Rayman by UBI Soft	84
TriTryst by Virgin Interactive	84
Great Naval Battles IV by SSI	85
Psychic Detective by Electronic Arts	85
Card Player's Paradise by QQP	85
Wayne Gretzky Hockey by Time Warner Interactive	85



Need more than Panzer General could give you? SSI returns with the other side of the war in Allied General.



Gabriel Knight returns for a new venture into the supernatural.

THE CGR BREAKDOWN

The numbers along the side of each review indicate how each reviewer feels the game rates in each of the five different areas. While each of these factors is important in determining the reviewer's final score for the game in question, these scores are in no way intended to necessarily average out to that reviewer's overall score. The overall average score for each game is the average of the three overall scores from the reviewers.

Games that average 90 or above receive the CGR Golden Triad award. A game that averages 95 or above receives the Platinum Triad. PC games are reviewed on Myoda 386 and 486 PCs and a Falcon Northwest Pentium 90 using a variety of sound cards and controllers. Macintosh games are played on a Quadra 800. CD-ROM titles are played with double- and quadruple-speed drives.

THE CGR REVIEWERS

Frank

Once upon a time, Frank thought that reviewing all of these games would be the coolest possible job in the world. While at times he's right, the sheer number of games that have come into the office over the last two months have left our Frank rather dazed. He's convinced that some of these games really aren't new releases—someone out there must want to see just how much he can take without snapping. Still, he's weathered the storm so far. Just don't ask him to play another game for the next couple of days or he may have to force-feed you a pile of CD-ROMS.

Ted

Once upon a time, Ted worked in the hotel business. Those days seem long past (as, in fact, they are) as he heads into his 29th issue on the reviewing team. The grizzled veteran of CGR reviewers has also managed to find time to finish up MechWarrior 2 and churn through creating a scenario for his other current passion, WarCraft II. All this and hardware too? That's the case for this month, at least. Just don't ask him what hardware is installed in all of the systems around the CGR offices, or he may become so confused that he has to beat you senseless with a joystick.

Scott

Once upon a time, Scott was a rookie on the review staff at CGR. Ahh, but those long-gone golden days of last month are behind us, and now Scott is an old hand at burning through game reviews. Luckily for him he started at the busiest time of the year—every month after these two can only be easier. He's been taking manuals home, hoping that the rest of us wouldn't see them (apparently, Scott hasn't learned that real gamers don't read manuals). Just don't ask him what it's like to drive through a couple of feet of snow in a rear-wheel drive car or he may have to sideswipe you.



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Allied Invasion

Allied General

"War is the continuation of politics by other means."

- Von Clausewitz

Distributed by:

Mindscape
83 Rowland Way
Novato, CA 94945
Phone: (415) 897-9900
Fax: (415) 897-2747

Developed by:

Strategic Simulations, Inc.

Requirements:

486/66, 8MB RAM, SVGA,
Win 3.1 or Win95, 2x CD

Recommendations:

Pentium, 12MB RAM, 4x CD

Controls:

Mouse or Keyboard

Number of Players:

1-2 Players

Available On:

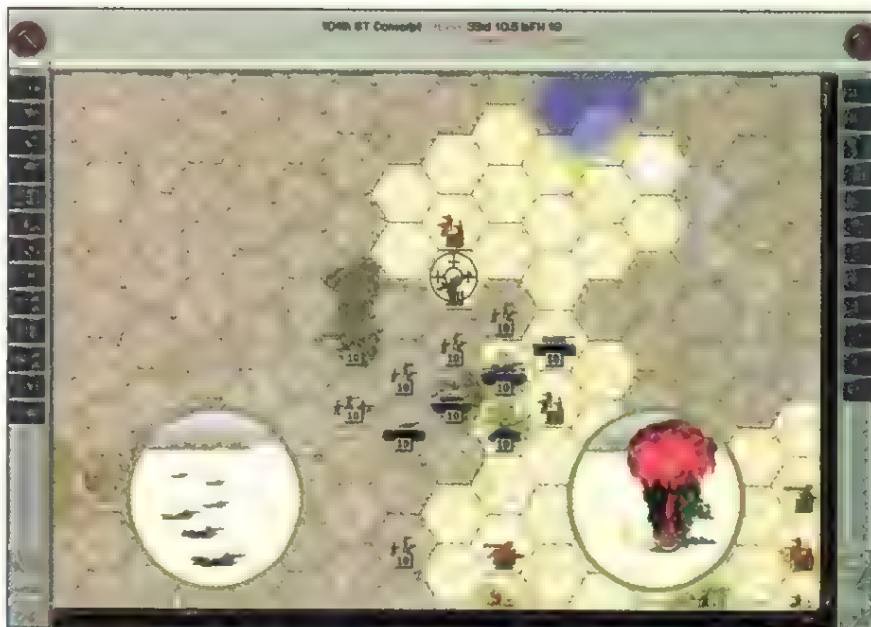
PC and compatibles

Street Price:

\$47.99

Average Score

91



When in need of clarification that yes, indeed you are getting wiped out, just select the action videos to play while you're in the campaign, they'll leave no doubt in your mind.

The Good: Strategy that is clear and simple. **The Bad:** It's World War II...again. **The Final Word:** A fine addition to the discriminating wargame lovers' library.

THE GAME



Allied General from Strategic Simulations, Inc. is the second installment in SSI's

Five-Star Series following in the footsteps of Panzer General. It brings over 35 different scenarios of World War II to the PC. Now you can enter into battle in the

African, Western European or Russian theaters. Play as the supreme commander of the Allied forces, or as German genius, Erwin Rommel.

Designed for use on the Windows 95 operating system, Allied General takes full advantage of the options available on the platform. Everything from e-mail gaming to fluid file transfer, Allied General utilizes many of

the options available from Windows 95.

Among the many features available are full VCR playback of a remote opponent's moves, allowing the player to analyze the opposition's strategy and resourcefulness.

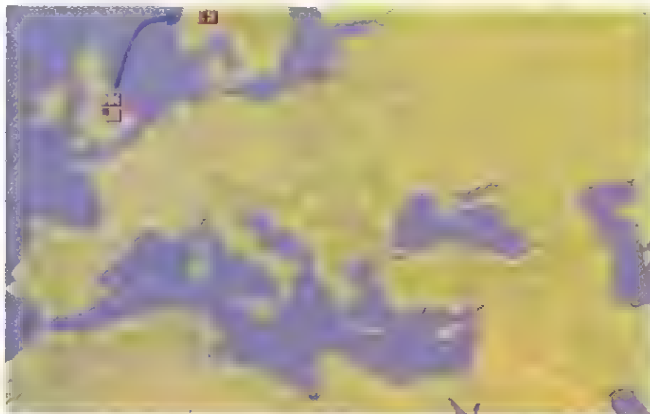
If you tire easily of replaying historical scenarios, Allied General offers several hypothetical scenarios such as Operation Jupiter, Winston Churchill's planned but never executed invasion of Norway.

As the simulation progresses, each player's forces become more experienced and combat honed. The individual units that survive each engagement develop more fully in their tactical abilities and are able to survive increasingly dangerous assignments.

The scenarios offer many different unit types. The ground units are comprised of anti-aircraft units, useful as weapons against both air units and infantry; the air defense units, specifically for use against air power; anti-tank units



which are divided into two separate but similar types of units; the AT, or towed anti-tank guns and self-propelled TDs, or tank destroyers. Next come the artillery units that, like the anti-tank units, are also divided into towed and self-propelled categories. Players who are into a strong defense can utilize the benefits of the fort



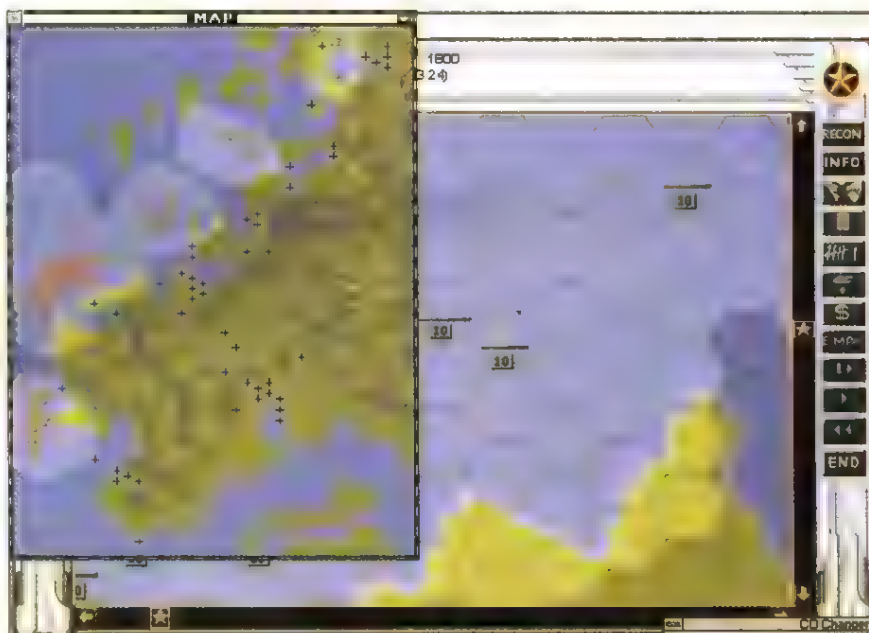
A view of the battlefield precedes each engagement.

units. Forts range from semi-mobile battlefield strong points, namely artillery or infantry fortifications, to permanent pill boxes and other emplacements. What army would be complete without the backbone of the military, the infantry? Infantry units vary from the ground pounders to the engineers and special forces troops, each with their own special use and tactical capabilities. The recon units can bring intelligence back from the battlefield to be integrated into the overall strategic picture. Tank units are the dominant mechanized units, they are strong and can take aggressive risks. The truck units are used for transport from the different parts of the battlefield and can be loaded up with almost everything from supplies to troops.

The air units classes consist of fighters, used for air support of bombing missions and light attack. Bombers are comprised of level bombers, large payload long range and tactical bombers that can be used against supply lines and artillery.

Finally, the sea class units are the capital ships, battleships, cruisers, etc. The carriers, each a mobile airfield for refueling, are of high prestige value. Destroyer classes consist of destroyers, escorts and small attack craft. Sea transport units are of paramount importance in the amphibious scenarios, namely any invasion from the sea. Last but not least, the submarine class is used exclusively against surface warships and can be a determining force in the war at sea.

LOSSES		The Berlin Scenario		LOSSES	
					
Infantry			Tactical Bomber		
Truck			Level Bomber		
Recon			Submarine		
Artillery			Destroyer		
Anti Tank			Capital Ship		
Anti-Aircraft			Land Transport		
Air Defense			Air Transport		
Food/Barracks			Sea Transport		
Fighter			Aircraft Carrier		



With Allied General's strategic view, you can see the overall picture of the battlefield and more importantly, what is happening outside of your immediate zone of control.

Along with the advantage of the several usual unit types, there are several special unit types that can be utilized in the scenarios, such as Finnish ski troops and special forces units.

On the strategic level, there are many different screens to aid the player in disseminating the information from the battlefield. All aspects from unit purchasing to the table of losses for each side, (left) are accessible to the player so that a full picture of the action can be understood from the strategic level.

Allied General puts all of the strategic and tactical decision-making power of a military commander at your fingertips. Remember that the fate of the free world is in your hands - foster your strengths and protect your flanks.



If you are successful, the once sad faces of the conquered masses will be smiling. When the allies march triumphantly into the towns to grasp victory from the mouth of defeat, all the world will rejoice.

Frank

50
Originality
92
Playability
90
Visuals
82
Audio
80
Manual

Allied General ranks up there with Steel Panthers and Panzer General, some of the finest strategy wargames ever created for the PC. The AI engine is tweaked to perfection, borrowing the same engine design as Panzer General. Even if you're an amateur wargame player like me, you'll find Allied General's interface easy to learn, and it won't be long before you find yourself helplessly addicted to playing through any one of its historical scenarios. The different unit icons accurately represent their respective unit type in the traditional tile-piece fashion, but lack the top-down realism of Steel Panther's graphics. Purchasing units and managing troops is pretty straightforward, but you'll still find yourself restricted by the number of prestige points you have. I was especially amused by the 1940s black-and-white movie theater setting for the WWII cinematic sequences that set the mood for historical combat. An absolute must for the strategy wargame lover

Ted

50
Originality
90
Playability
88
Visuals
78
Audio
72
Manual

Like its predecessor, Panzer General Allied General is a very sweet wargame. The myriad options offered by the interface are clear and well thought out. The update of the game to a Windows app has not degraded the speed of the game play as far as I can tell; as I ran this under Windows 3.1 and not Windows 95. I can't tell you anything about a speed increase or decrease under the latter. It appears that the AI engine is a straight port from PG, but this is hardly a bad thing. The graphics are slightly more detailed than standard wargame fare, although the code had some trouble deciding exactly how large my desktop was in 640x480 mode (it ran off the edge of the screen and refused all attempts at making it fit the desktop space). On the other hand, it ran perfectly and looked twice as good in 800x600 mode. It's good to seeSSI getting back into form with their wargames; since for awhile there, it looked as though they might crash and burn.

Scott

60
Originality
90
Playability
75
Visuals
80
Audio
85
Manual

Allied General is one of this reviewer's favorites. It has good graphics for a strategy game, and the AI is quite challenging when you play it with the difficulty level on high. I literally walked through the easy levels, but the hard AI really gave me pause. I estimate that it would have taken me probably over seven hours to beat the computer in a totally one-sided victory on hard AI. Never before has a computer simulation stumped me this much. Computers just aren't that smart yet. Allied General executes flanking and pincer maneuvers that Schwartzkopf would be proud of. The overall picture of the battlefield gave me a good moment of fear when I realized that the AI was cutting off my supply lines while decimating my rear guard with air attacks. Eventually I won, but it did take a lot of concentration. The prestige points are extremely important to the overall victory or defeat, so pay close attention to what you target with your attacks and when you make them.

Allied General

General tips to help beat the computer. Plus, The battle for Moscow

Allied General is a World War II strategy game from Strategic Simulations, Inc. that has over 35 different scenarios in which to play as either the Allied or Axis generals. You can play many of the historical scenarios that are set up the way that they actually occurred or you can tinker with many of the possible scenarios like Churchill's never-executed Operation Jupiter in which the British would have invaded Norway.

The computer AI is a major player in the single-player scenarios, because once the simulation starts the computer has to act on the fly using only the inherent programming guides to ensure a smooth battle and ultimate victory.

How the AI responds to the historical scenario chosen is a subject of too great a depth to be covered in the space allowed, so some general strategies will be discussed that will help the player to get a good feel for the tactics needed to beat the computer. After that, we'll take a look at the way that the battle for Moscow could have gone had the Germans made different decisions.

The first and most important aspect of any strategy game is to first know your forces inside and out. Allied General makes this easy as you can see almost any information that you need to call up with the press of a button. Get to know what your different types of units are capable of and what their weaknesses are. For example, an engineer unit (below), is excellent for building, so it should



Prestige points allow you to purchase units that you will need in order to complete the scenario or simply to replace ones that you have lost in battle.

be sent into crossing areas. However, it is very weak defensively, so don't have it dig in or try to do things that it was not meant for.

It is important for the player to know his army and to know its strengths. Become familiar with all of the units that are in your arsenal. Learn what type of missions they are good for and what their movement

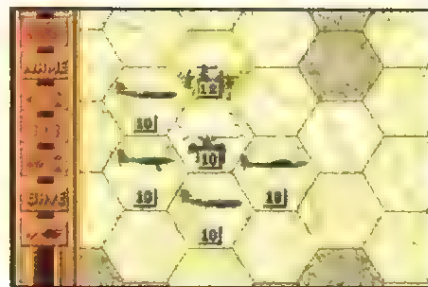


In this scenario, it would seem that the setup of the Russian forces is to the east, but the several units pictured above are only the tip of the iceberg. Don't start your attack without full recon, this happened to be a feint, the real force is north.

allowances are. You will need to know how fast they can move and what type of terrain they are best suited for. Once you have this in mind, plan your attack keeping these factors of where the troops will go, what terrain they will encounter, etc. in mind. For example, if enemy units are reconnoitered as being nearby, don't send your tanks over a river that has no bridge built on it as this will eat up all of the tank unit's movement allowance in that single move. It will then be vulnerable to attack while it is immobile. It will most likely be totally defensive for the turn.

Air power should be next on your list as this can be the turning point of any good battle. Keep your air units attacking in revolving patterns to soften up the enemy. Run a unit on a mission and then return it to refuel and rearm. This does two things: keeps the possibility of losing your aircraft from AA guns down to a minimum, and makes sure that you won't drive your airplanes into the ground due to a lack of fuel. This becomes a major issue after the ground war has started to heat up and the infantry and mechanized units begin to need air cover and enemy fire suppression. Also, when your airplanes run more missions, they get better at it. The AI in the computer begins to season your units as well and they become more adept at their missions. After you make an advance of some distance, start looking around for fields to

take over that are closer to your ultimate objective. You can then transfer your craft to



Air power is of essential importance to enemy supply interdiction and to suppressing enemy troop units while you conduct strategic movement.

what was the enemy base and begin to fly from there. You will have a far easier time with executing the round robin type of air attacks from a closer distance. Don't let your airbases get taken by the enemy. If you allow the enemy to infiltrate and take an airbase, you run the risk of losing a great percentage of your air power and you will subsequently have a harder time suppressing the enemy. This is especially true if you are depending on aircraft carriers for air support. Anti-tank guns are good protection for airfields.

Your sea power is of no small issue and

THE 11TH HOUR {the five stages.}

1 Shock.

You finally figure out The 7th Guest™, only to hear that its sequel, The 11th Hour is going to be released.

2 Disbelief.

This can't be true! You read the articles, memorize the reviews, & talk incessantly about The 11th Hour. Friends shun you.

3 Resentment.

They said it would be out, and you believed them. Where is it?! Why would they lie to you?!!

4 Acceptance.

It's out!!! Finally! It's everything they said it would be & more. Now, if you could just figure out what is behind the...

5 Death.



Visit our web site at <http://www.vie.com>

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You can stop grieving now. The 11th Hour has finally arrived. This PC CD-ROM game fuses incredible 3-D graphics and mind-numbing challenges



with a full-length psychological thriller. It's also 12 times bigger and two CDs longer than its

predecessor, The 7th Guest. So, is The 11th Hour really worth the wait? Well, we think it's totally killer.



should be given some thought. The unit types that you will command in the sea power scenarios should be thoroughly explored as to their abilities, strengths and weaknesses, etc. They should be deployed with forethought and care. Always keep your carriers well protected and out of harm's way as far as enemy submarines go. To lose a carrier will devastate your prestige.

Next, make sure that you have the complete picture, as accurately as possible, of what the battlefield looks like in terms of where the enemy is and where your troops are positioned, terrain types, paths of attack, etc. before you make one single move. Have your objective clearly in mind before you begin moving units and blowing things up.

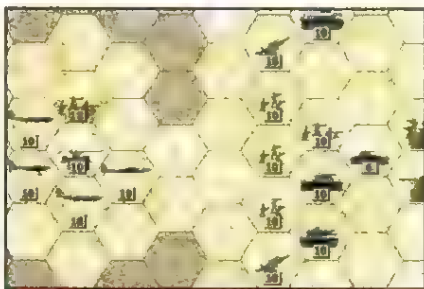
After you have a complete picture of what the setup looks like (below), start planning your attack. Where will the main thrust of your attack commence? What obstacles are in your way? What will the enemy be likely to do when you begin? Make sure that you at least think of these questions before you march into battle with the enemy. If you don't, the AI will likely cut you to pieces. Once you



An overview of the battlefield is an excellent piece of intelligence for spotting enemy troops and for getting the feel for the direction of the battle.

have a clear plan in mind, begin to make a backup plan of what you will do if your primary falls through. It may work, and it may not.

Once the battle has commenced you should have a clearer strategic picture (above), of what the enemy's emplacements look like, where his strength pockets are and where the weak links in his defense are. Find the weak areas in the enemy's lines and exploit them. Is it possible to cut his supply lines? Can you take a key airbase and weaken his air power? These questions can be answered as you go through the game and will undoubtedly modify your strategy as you



The initial placement of your troops can be of the utmost importance when facing an enemy with superior resources. Don't squander your troops on small battles.



play. Be flexible and make sure that you have not committed to any course of action where you cannot withdraw if necessary.

Prestige plays an important role in Allied General, don't overlook it. When you go into

incurring and where they are occurring. When one of your units falls to an effectiveness below 60% it should be replaced no matter how close to the enemy objective it may be. It is always better to regroup and try again than stay in and risk a bad position. Once your units are gone they can only be replaced by new units, the experience and the battle readiness element of a veteran unit is lost with them.

The Battle for Moscow

Once you feel like testing your might, take the side of the Axis powers and play the Moscow scenario with full AI and all the chips stacked against you. When this reviewer



a battle for the first time, in the options menu you should set the prestige and experience of your general on +3 and the computer AI should be in the blue. This way you can get a feel for the battle before you take the computer AI head-on with all the chips stacked against you. After you have an idea of what is going on, re-start your game with the AI in the red and make any adjustments you feel that you can handle. Keep sharp track of your prestige. It goes up when you win an engagement and down when you get trounced. You can buy more weapons and units with a higher prestige than a lower one, so try not to make attacks or put your troops in a position where you are likely to be defeated. Above all else, you have to keep an eye on what the computer is doing in order to beat it successfully, so don't even think about not watching the action unfold.

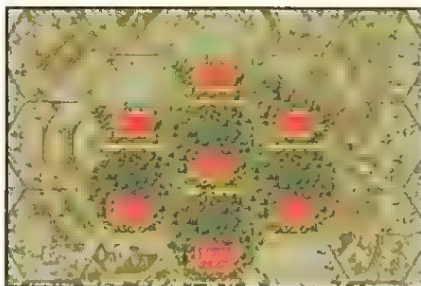
When you think that you have all the information you need, go for it. Commit to a course of action and stick to it. Once you take on the enemy forces, keep to your plan and let it fly. When you get into the fray keep pounding the enemy in his weak spots and punch holes through his lines. Confusion will eventually take hold of the enemy if you get behind his lines and start taking out units.

During the battle, make sure to keep a sharp eye out for how many losses you are

played the scenario, he took on the computer with the highest AI levels possible and achieved an excellent victory as the Germans. Here's how you can too. The author only used 85% of his available troops, and only bought one extra unit. See if you can do the same.

First of all, you will have to be ready to spend a few hours with this one, as it is very time consuming when played right. So grab a cup of coffee and get comfortable.

The opening action sets up the German army units several kilometers outside of Moscow. The Russian positions are heavily



fortified at the start of the scenario. Don't let the picture fool you, when full intelligence is realized, it will change drastically and the Germans will have a tough time getting through the defenses if a frontal assault is

The Time Has Come For Capstone's Groundbreaking Graphic Adventure...

Roger Zelazny and Jane Lindskold's

CHRONOMASTER

Time stands still! Thousands of lives are at stake!

Join Horda, the Chronomaster, in this epic quest for vengeance in a future where magic & science co-exist. This ground-breaking Graphic Adventure will take you on a journey through man-made pocket universes full of cyborgs, pirates & witches. Can you guide Horda & use his bottled time to solve the mystery, re-start the universes and return justice to the stars?



Boundless gameplay as players move freely from screen to screen within pocket universes in any order they please.



Challenging puzzles and non-linear plots with multiple solutions and varied endings.



Striking, highly detailed, and fully rendered 3D artwork and full motion animation. Fully authored voices and original soundtrack.

"The Graphics are wonderful ...This adventure is a game apart, with its imaginative story & atypical gameplay..."

Computer Gaming World

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"Beauty and the Beast"
as "Korda"



Brent Spiner
"Star Trek: The Next
Generation"
as "Milo"



Lolita Davidovich
"Intersection"
as "Jester"

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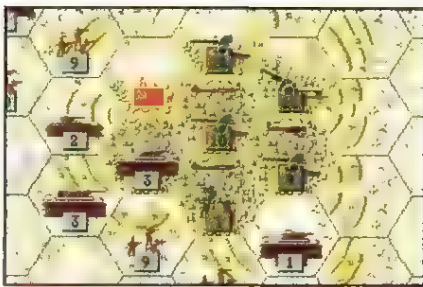
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made. The reason is that this will delay the German advance and give the Russians time to place their reinforcements.

Once a recon flight mission to the northern edge of the map is made (while you're there



Reconnaissance will give you valuable information that you can utilize to your advantage once the battle really heats up and it's too late to turn back.

drop some bombs), you can begin to bring the troops up into the picture. Load up the artillery and make sure to buy some Falshirmjager or paratrooper units so that you can encircle Moscow once you get there.

Once you have the battle formation planned, you are ready to go into action.

Bring the infantry units, under air and artillery cover, up to Moscow's northwest edge, as this is where the troop emplacements are the weakest. After the initial shock of the engagement wears off, the Russians will begin immediately regrouping for a counterattack. Be ready because the counterattack will slice up your units and disrupt your supply lines if your ranks are not tight enough. Also, you should be prepared to lose some tanks in the battle due to the high num-

ber of anti-tank gun emplacements in or near Moscow. No matter what else you see that needs to be done on the battlefield, save your air power for bombing Moscow, it is after all the target of the scenario and should be the main focal point of your energies.

The next step is to take their offensive capabilities out as quickly as you can. That means doubling up your attacks on enemy

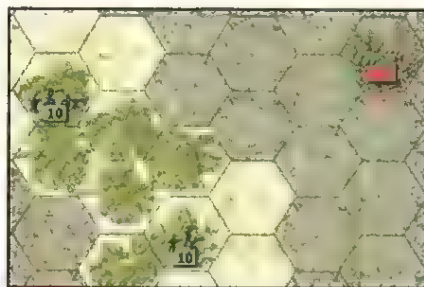


When you enter the city, be sure you have enough troops to last throughout the battle. When units get attrited to below 60%, take them out of service.

units such as artillery and infantry. Get them out of the way so that the heavy, mechanized units like your tanks can go through and destroy any fortifications that have been built up over the span of the scenario.

One thing to be mindful of in this scenario is that in the beginning stages of troop development some of the cities can be taken with little or no effort on the part of the Axis commander. This should be accomplished as soon as possible due to the added bonuses in prestige that can be gained with little risk. Don't let your troops get too caught up in the peripheral action, though. If a city does not

yield after a turn or two, pull back. You will still have successfully depleted some of the enemy's strength.



This small Russian city is well within the range of capture, and within the potential for these two ground units. It's an easy target and will yield prestige points.

If all goes as planned, and you don't catch any major resistance, you should be able to breach the city and take out the rest of the Russian troops. After the infantry has successfully penetrated the city, Moscow will fall and the Russians will surrender to you rather than be destroyed. Congratulations!

- Scott Gehrs



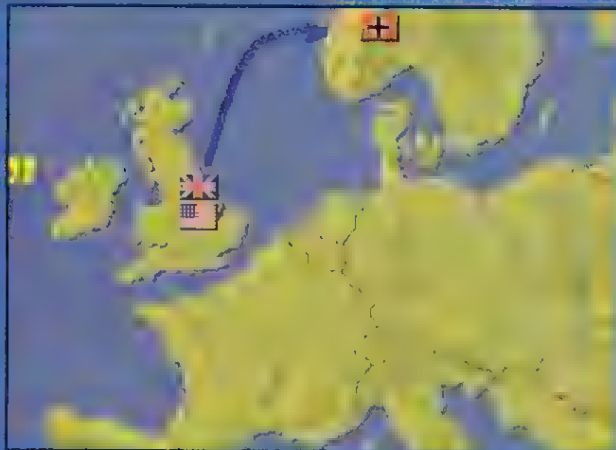
General Fantasy: Allied General Offers, "What If?"

Among the many new scenarios that Allied General offers, there are several hypothetical engagements that the player can try out. These are a mixture of battle plans that never came to fruition and several that were never thought of before.

What if, for example, Winston Churchill had invaded Norway? Would the war have been over in less time than it historically took? Or perhaps the scattering of the troops would have been too great for the Allies and they would have fallen earlier.

Allied General's hypothetical scenarios examine the tactical possibilities in battles such as Operation Jupiter. The year is 1944, Germany has already lost much of Europe and the war is about to come to an end.

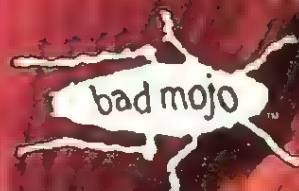
If the game itself becomes a melange of historical battles, players can try out the historically possible scenarios that Strategic Simulations has added. When in command of the Allies, there are several options available to the player. As mentioned above, Operation Jupiter is one. Operation Overlord is yet another that will test the true mettle of the



player. The hypothetical scenarios still adhere to the strict rules of Allied General and the basic structure is the same, but players will be introduced to several new unit types including Finnish Ski Troops and submarines.

Most of the historical scenarios in Allied General should be enough of a challenge to conquer the average player's thirst for battle, but for those who are in need of an alternative to re-fighting the battle for Leningrad, the hypothetical scenarios offer a unique challenge to the wargamer who has always wondered, "what if?"

FROM THE CREATORS OF IRON HELIX



bad mojo

THE ROACH GAME



YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS...

Inside a strange and desolate building—a place where souls are lost or found, you have the perfect plan for escape. But there is no such thing as a perfect plan....

Bad Mojo sends you into a world of eerie darkness...as a cockroach! What you discover may shock you. What you don't may kill you. Either way you won't come out the same. You may not even come out as a person at all....

Stunning 3D-rendered environments, beautiful photo-realistic imagery, an original score soundtrack and over thirty-five minutes of live-action video pull you into the mysterious and gritty atmosphere of Bad Mojo.

DEVELOPED BY



FOR WINDOWS AND MACINTOSH
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<http://www.badmojo.com>

Past Temptations

Tempest 2000

Atari
brings its
retro-
arcade
favorites
to your
home PC.

Distributed by:
Atari Corporation
1196 Borregas Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94089
Phone (408) 745-2000
Fax (408) 745-2088

Developed by:
Atari Interactive

Requirements:
386DX/40, 2MB RAM, VGA,
DOS 5, CD-ROM

Recommended:
Same as above

Controller:
Keyboard or Joystick

Number of Players:
1-2 Players

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$29.95



Average Score

77

You will definitely want to brush-up on those lightning-fast, arcade-game reflexes in the Flipper-ent-Blast world of Tempest 2000.

The Good: Reminds you of your youth in an arcade and doesn't require quarters. **The Bad:** Graphics blander than you remember. **The Final Word:** If Atari would create a dial controller, it would be more fun.

THE GAME

In 1981 Atari introduced Tempest, an extra-sensory visual and futuristic video game that would revolutionize the arcade industry. Fifteen years later its direct descendent, Tempest 2000, has blasted its way onto the home PC with powerful 3D polygons, particle displays, cycle-shading and a CD-quality techno-rave soundtrack. Ride the rim with your Blaster and fire your SuperZapper upon crafty Flippers and Fuseballs. Team up with a friend or AI droid and venture into 100 unknown galaxies filled with hos-

tile Demon Heads, pesky Spikers and lethal Pulsars. You can play any of the three included Tempest games: TempestPlus is an enhanced version of the original arcade classic with three all-new play modes; Tempest 2000 is the 21st century remake of the coin-op version, introducing new enemies, power ups and bonus warp worlds; and TempestDuel allows you to play against a friend in two-player mode via modem/serial connection. Get ready to shoot-and-spin with Tempest 2000.

Frank

50
Originality

80
Playability

70
Visuals

90
Audio

85
Manual

Those of you who love to reminisce about the days of the Atari 2600 and spending your lunch money at the local arcade will most likely lavish in nostalgia with Tempest 2000 for the PC. Aside from its all-too-familiar game play, Atari has added two-player mode/serial capabilities and a CD-quality techno-rave soundtrack to increase playability. The graphics are pretty lame compared to today's standards. However, the smooth animation and fast-paced game play make up for its lack of visual detail. The best characteristic of this game is that it plays, looks and sounds like the arcade coin-op version. And most importantly, it's just as challenging as the original Tempest.

Ted

10
Originality

83
Playability

45
Visuals

86
Audio

80
Manual

The original arcade version of Tempest was a lot of fun to play. It was unlike everything that had come before it, with bright multicolor displays and a challenge that was both difficult and addictive. The difficulty and addictiveness are still there, but the game is stultifyingly dull to me now. There have been a few steps taken to give T2K a fresh feel, but they are small steps, and they take you only a couple of feet. There is nothing here that is "above and beyond the call" in terms of making improvements over the original. Even the side-by-side Tempest Duel doesn't qualify as an improvement. I enjoyed watching the arcade version as much as I enjoyed playing it. Too little, and way too late.

Scott

50
Originality

90
Playability

62
Visuals

88
Audio

78
Manual

I used to like Tempest. Now, my memories have been replaced by another feeling—confusion. I am confused about the fact that this is not really anything different. I did not feel like it was an update of my old favorite, simply a computer version of my long-lost friend. If that is all it is expected to be, okay, I'll bite, why buy it? Well, I wouldn't. Three reasons: It is not any tougher than the original, it is not better graphically speaking and it doesn't have more levels. I am sincerely bothered by the fact that T2000 could not be brought into the 1990's with any more flare and panache than a used car. Tempest used to be one of my favorites, but when you update a game, don't you want to make it better than the first?

HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS AND ANNIHILATE ENEMIES!



Infiltrate the enemy
Comm Bunker.

You've crashed on a strange planet. You quickly become friends with the local alien, Gaan. Together, you'll go from hauling butt through the forest to blasting into a bomb-filled mine shaft to fighting through an armory to destroy a reactor. It's Alien Odyssey -- the PC CD-ROM game with incredibly smooth character animation and Argonaut's exclusive 3D

adventure game technology. It's total annihilation. But in a friendly sort of way.



Use teamwork to solve
puzzles and outwit invaders.

ALIEN
ODYSSEY
PHILIPS



Available on CD-ROM

The End of All Eras

Battles in Time

*QQP
finally
unleashes
their
ultimate
product.*

Distributed by:
American Laser Games
4801 Lincoln Road
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone: (505) 880-1718
Fax: (505) 880-1557

Developed by:
QQP

Requirements:
386/25, 4MB RAM, SVGA,
DOS 5, 2xCD-ROM

Recommended:
Same as above

Controller:
Mouse or Keyboard

Number of Players:
1-4 Players

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$44.95



During the Tactical phase, you will need to strategically position your forces and dig in for a fierce encounter. Keep your troops behind suitable cover and take out the artillery batteries first.

Average Score
49

The Good: How often do you get to wage war with dinosaurs? **The Bad:** This game was obviously finished in haste. **The Final Word:** We can only hope that this will outsell Mad Dog McCree.

THE GAME

In the far distant future of planet Earth, humans have evolved to a higher state of civilization where warfare is no longer a practiced art. For hundreds of years now, this condition of peace, love and harmony has prevailed, to the point where humans no longer know how to wage war. This is unfortunate, as now Earth is in imminent danger of attack from a hostile alien race. War is the only option; the people of Earth must find someone in this nonviolent society who possesses an aptitude for warfare.

You are one of the chosen ones designated to prove your skills and save Earth from an alien invasion. To test your strategic awareness, a time gate has been created to deliver you and the other candidates into Earth's historical past which saw the most violence, specifically the prehistoric era, Roman era, WWII and the year 2025. Once you've been approved for the position, you will command your military forces against the alien invaders. The battle for the rest of time has begun.

Frank

60
Originality

55
Playability

65
Visuals

50
Audio

65
Manual

What exactly is it that QQP is attempting to offer experienced strategy war game players with Battles in Time? Nostalgia? Not only are the graphics below average, but the non-intuitive interface suffers from several bugs that should've been corrected before being shipped. The icons era function didn't work, but instead caused the entire screen to disappear underneath a panel of wallpaper. Each unit was unidentifiable during the replenishment and movement phases (they appeared as black blocks), which caused some confusion during deployment. The AI wasn't too bad, and quite honestly, the tactical phases were the only playable part of the game. I'd stay far away from this one.

Ted

30
Originality

25
Playability

20
Visuals

35
Audio

75
Manual

QQP has built some fine games in the past, and now they are no more. My farewell eulogy to them will not be kind, however, because BIT is a giant pile. The graphics drivers are unfinished, apparently American Laser Games, who bought QQP earlier this year, simply couldn't wait to liquidate the company before they finished their last game. Where there should be nice little icons on the screen, you instead get black blobs. This makes the game unplayable, as you have no way of estimating troop types other than to get into battle with them and hope. The interface is fairly straightforward, although why you would care if you can't see the game properly is beyond me. Big thumbs down.

Scott

75
Originality

56
Playability

70
Visuals

62
Audio

71
Manual

Battles in Time is one of the most difficult games I had to try to play. The interface is strange and the graphics are a mixture of extremely sharp segue shots and really mediocre graphics in the game itself. The story was fairly innovative but the execution left a lot to be desired. What can you say when the game hangs up every five minutes or so on a Pentium 133? What I was most disappointed with however, was the lack of intelligent planning for the game prior to its release. The fact that the game was put out prematurely might simply be my opinion, but a close look at the game reveals that some parts of it just don't work. Then again, perhaps that is why QQP is just another name in time.

Twisted Metal is violent,
sadistic, and has
no redeeming moral value.



No wonder it was voted
game of the year.



There you are, cruising the streets of L.A. in the year 2010, and some loser cuts you off. But instead of merely giving him the old universal hand signal, you get to blow the joker to bits with a heat-seeking missile. Feels good, doesn't it? Welcome to the world of Twisted Metal. Mean streets filled with deadly four-wheeled machines. Road hogs who want to see your body in a bag, unless, of course, you put them

there first. Customized cop cars, murderous monster trucks and other mutant mobiles sporting lethal extras make Twisted Metal the only fight game on wheels. That's why Electronic Gaming Monthly named Twisted Metal "Game Of The Year" on PlayStation™. And, it's a Windows 95 native. So get behind the wheel. And experience the thrill of defensive driving.



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Time to Play God

Chronomaster

Time is the master, we are the puppets hanging on life's thin thread.

Average Score

88

Distributed by:
Capstone
501 Brickell Key Drive
Sixth Floor
Miami, FL 33131
Phone: (305) 373-7700
Fax: (305) 577-8488

Developed by:
DreamForge

Requirements:
486/33, 4MB RAM, VGA,
DOS 5.0, 2x CD0

Recommended:
Pentium 90, 8MB RAM,
SVGA

Controller:
Mouse or Keyboard
Number of Players:
1 Player

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$39.95



Wherever he goes, Rene Korda is never truly alone with the constant assistance of the PDA or Personal Digital Assistant close by his side. The PDA makes information instantly available.

The Good: Superior graphics and animation will make you drool for more. **The Bad:** The interface leaves a lot to be desired. **The Final Word:** For 60 or more hours of game play, it's hard to go wrong.

THE GAME

Deep in the reaches of time and space, someone is putting time on hold. In the story, created by Roger Zelazny and Jane Lindskold, a mischievous presence, possibly even malevolent in nature, is taking whole universes and making them stand still. The purpose is unknown and the danger to all of existence is great. Only one man can save the day

and reverse the effects of the notorious villain. That man is Rene Korda, played by Ron Perlman of television's *Beauty and the Beast* fame.

Rene is a Renaissance man, part creator of pocket universes, part diplomat and part starship pilot and astrogator. Rene has all the tools that one could ask for at his disposal, a spaceship that can

travel at faster-than-light speeds and can take him directly into the frozen universes, and a database filled with useful information regarding the mission. On board the ship, Rene has the help of an extremely complex database of facts that can be called up at any time to retrieve information.

Along with the extensive hardware, Korda also has the assistance of a perky on-board computer intelligence, played by Lolita Davidovich, whose credits include *Blaze*, *Intersection* and *Leap of Faith*.

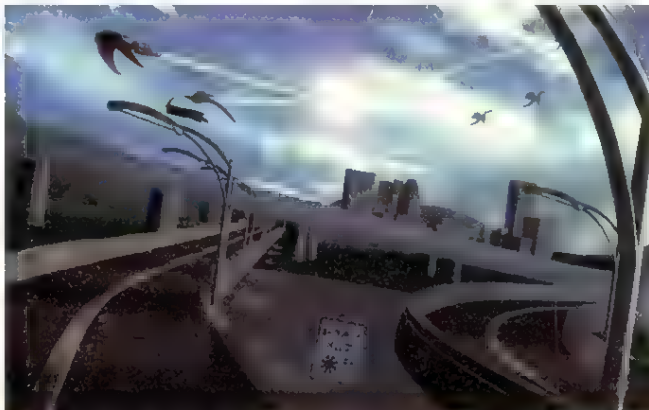
In the game, Korda is charged with the mission of restarting the universes that have been put into stasis, getting to the bottom of the mystery to see who is behind it all, and most importantly, why. This is done by finding the World Key which is used to return time to normal in each world that

Korda visits.

Players work their way through the mysteries using supplies of bottled time to aid Rene in interacting with people and things that have been put into stasis. Bottled time animates whatever it touches for as long as it is in contact with it. Rene has only a limited supply, so players have to budget their time accordingly.

As Korda travels through the different worlds, he encounters several people that will affect his journey in various ways. Some will help him in his quest, others will try to kill him outright. Most of the time however, the player determines, by the decisions that he or she makes, which course Korda's future will end up taking.

One of the characters is Milo, played by Brent Spiner who played Data on the hit television series, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Milo may be friend or enemy to Korda; however, he is extremely important to the success



Beautiful cinematics highlight game play.

or failure of the game.

Among the different elements of Chronomaster's construction, which in itself combined the talents of more than 50 artists, animators, etc., are the vocal talents of more than 100 different actors. For the vocal recording sessions used in the game, Perlman and Spinner recorded their scenes together in the studio to ensure that their vocal quality would be smooth and the integrity of the performance would be maximized. It is a rare thing that two actors working on a project such as this ever get to even meet each other, let alone run their entire performances together due to the hectic nature of the average Hollywood star's schedule.

Lolita Davidovich adds her vocal talent to the mix with her portrayal of the artificial intelligence on board Korda's spacecraft, the Jester. Jester is her name and sassing Korda at every opportunity is her game. Her talents can also be heard whenever she must relay a message over the Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) that Korda carries with him wherever he goes. It is a unique link between Korda and the Jester.

Chronomaster contains many diverse elements of gaming such as animated cut scenes



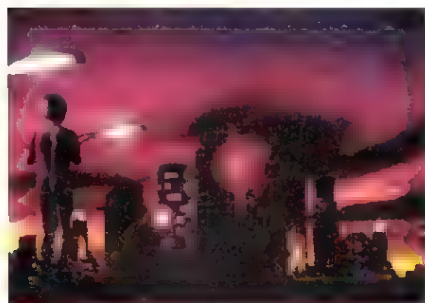
While Korda contemplates the adventures he has had, the computer animators are busy creating the cover of an old Yes album in the background.

and high-resolution original artwork throughout, a role-playing element that puts the player into the action through the character of Korda and several mysteries and puzzles that should make for an interesting and enjoyable experience in the bizarre and foreign worlds that have been unfortunate enough to be caught up in stasis.

Chronomaster is an orchestrated collection of cinematic talent and computer wizardry that blends the collective, diverse and imaginative powers of several of Hollywood's finest artists into a game that may well live up to the crucial and true test, the test of time.



Although he is master of time and space, Korda still manages to get into trouble from time to time.



The surreal and unusual view of Reno Korda's home city at night.

Frank

82 Although Chronomaster delivers some of the sharpest graphics I've seen in a while, its overall composition is marred by an unfriendly interface and elusive puzzle solutions. Interacting with the environment and managing my inventory was almost as challenging as solving the various puzzles. Even though I'm an adventure game lover, I expect there to be some kind of logical connection between a puzzle and its solution. In one instance I had to fire an abandoned rocket cannon at a talking statue located clear across a land mass. The rocket cannon itself had to be armed, but there was no way of knowing what the cannon was being aimed at. And since the cannon and the statue weren't even in the same location (I had to fly between the two), the solution was hardly a rational consideration. Challenging? Yes. Realistic? No. I'm sure game players will get their money's worth of puzzles, but will spend a fortune on its 1-900 hint line.

Originality
79
Playability
92
Visuals
90
Audio
86
Manual

Ted

50 Chronomaster has a unique and compelling story, beautiful graphics, good sound and an interface that aggravated the crap out of me. I'm certain that adventure game lovers will like this interface; it's very similar to the one used in many Sierra titles, such as Space Quest V. However, it addresses a problem with that interface by putting all of the tools right on the desktop, rather than hiding them from you in a drop-down menu. In spite of the interface, I'm recommending this game, simply because there's a lot to like here. The graphics, as I mentioned, are wonderful, and the puzzles vary between difficulty levels ranging from easy to moderately difficult. The big thing here, though, is how much bang you get for your buck: about 60 hours or so. Admittedly, the entire 60 hours of game play are not all great, but there are more gems here than I've seen in an adventure game since Activision put out Return to Zork. It's not ground-breaking, but it's entertaining.

Originality
82
Playability
89
Visuals
88
Audio
87
Manual

Scott

98 Chronomaster thoroughly excited my interest from the very first time it was presented to us in the CGR offices, until now as I am writing this. I find myself getting into the game more and more every time that I play it. It is addictive to a point. The graphics are fabulous, the characterizations are excellent and the games' plots in general have intrigued me from day one. The story is something that I have never come across before and the details in the individual game sub-plots have kept me playing with the darn thing for hours. The sound and the seamless graphics are great to watch and the fact that the cut scenes and the dialogue can be rifled through when you want to do stuff, is great. When I come across a game that I like this much, I want a copy at home, so when we are through reviewing Chronomaster here, I'll be taking it home with me. I have one criticism only with regards to Chronomaster, the interface is slightly cumbersome. Overall, I loved it.

Originality
90
Playability
95
Visuals
96
Audio
80
Manual

The background is a dark, textured surface with faint, glowing lines and patterns. A large, dark, circular object, resembling a planet or a large eye, is the central focus. Inside this circle, the title "ZORK" is written in a large, white, serif font, with a small diamond shape in the center of the 'O'. Below "ZORK", the word "NEMESIS" is written in a smaller, white, serif font. Above the circle, the words "THE FORBIDDEN LANDS" are written in a small, white, serif font, arranged in a semi-circle. In the top right corner, there is a small, glowing, circular object with a yellow light inside, possibly a candle or a small fire. At the bottom, there is a faint, circular logo with the text "EPIC GAMES" and "A DIVISION OF ATARI" around a central diamond shape.

ZORK

NEMESIS



ZORK PLACED MILLIONS

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THE SPELL IS YET

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Modern-Day Mage

CyberMage: Darklight Awakening

*Experience
the
fascinating
comic-
book
adventure
from D.W.
Bradley.*

Distributed by:
Origin
5918 W. Courtyard Drive
Austin, TX 78738
Phone: (512) 434-4263
Fax: (512) 794-8958

Developed by:
D.W. Bradley

Requirements:
486/66, 8MB RAM, SVGA,
DOS 5, 2xCD-ROM

Recommended:
Pentium, 16MB RAM

Controller:
Mouse, Keyboard or
Joystick

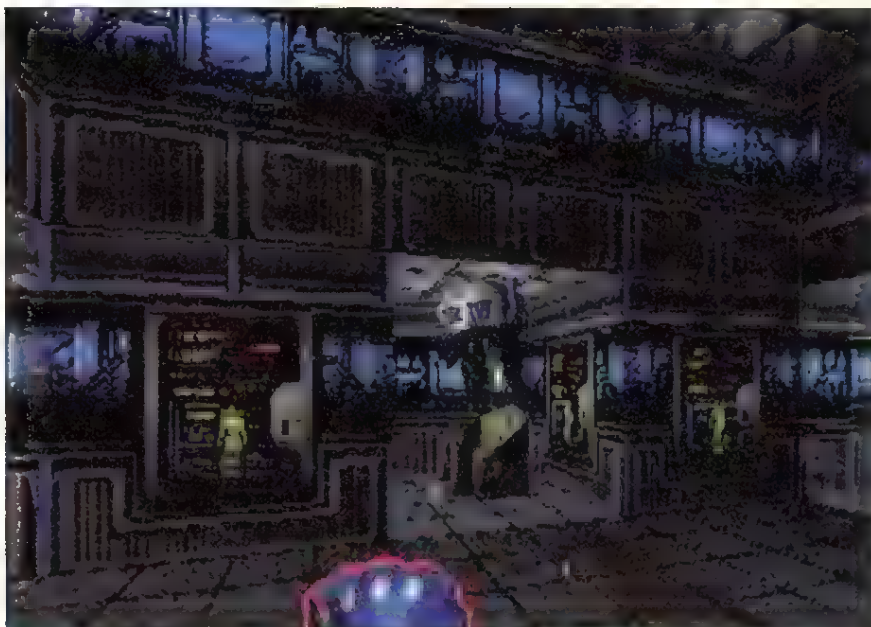
Number of Players:
One Player

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$49.99

Average Score

64



Your default weapon and only power at the beginning of the game is your Star Bolt. You'll need to collect "mang" in order to keep it and the other Darklight Powers working.

The Good: A nifty comic book gets packed into every box. **The Bad:** The interface is interesting in theory only. **The Final Word:** Even gamers with high-powered systems will complain about this game.

THE GAME

Welcome to the world of CyberMage. Set in the dark and violent future of planet Earth where corporate conglomerates fight for complete control over vital resources in a never-ending battle. In response to this ongoing conflict, you become hopelessly involved when you rescue a powerful corporate executive condemned to death. In return for his salvation, he gives you the Darklight Gem, an alien implant that bestows upon you strange new powers. As you continue your quest to quell the corporate

crisis, you will encounter a series of conflicts, ultimately leading you to a final showdown against the mighty LeCrom, the only other being in possession of the powerful Darklight gem. Cybermage: Darklight Awakening features a multilevel 21st century environment in a first-person perspective interface, all in stunning 3D SVGA graphics (VGA mode is also supported). Pulse-racing action sequences, numerous puzzles, full digitized speech and music keep the intensity of play at maximum speed.

Frank

55
Originality
72
Playability
75
Visuals
75
Audio
85
Manual

By studying the screen shots on the back of the box, CyberMage looks pretty sharp. In fact, the graphics look better on the box than they do in real life. The major catch is that the SVGA graphics require a whopping 16MB RAM. Even with a Pentium 133, the animation suffered from severe shudder-vision in full-screen mode. You'll also find yourself wanting to remap the keyboard functions, especially after encountering your first ladder. Aside from the technical stuff, CyberMage plays like a mediocre Doom clone with an RPG-style interface. The only problem is that neither the Doom or RPG gaming genre will find their respective elements up to par, and may condemn such hybrids in the future.

Ted

34
Originality
74
Playability
66
Visuals
78
Audio
87
Manual

Yet another DOOM clone ruined. What is unusual about the ruination of this game is that it's not entirely the fault of a finicky interface, although that does play an important role. The thing that I don't understand is that, on our lovely Pentium 133 with 16MB RAM, this game is choppy in full screen and near-full screen mode. I'm not certain whether the programmers simply blew their deadline for optimizing the code or if they simply didn't care about optimizing it. Add to this mess some of the crappiest graphics this side of a diner placemat, and you have a great recipe for disaster of the fiscal kind. I'd wait for CyberMage to hit the discount bins, and even then I still might not buy it.

Scott

60
Originality
75
Playability
60
Visuals
58
Audio
79
Manual

Overall, I thought that Cybermage was fun. I don't really like comic books and I truly feel that the Doom clone play style had better die soon, but to be fair Cybermage is definitely different. The story of the action is about par for a comic adventure and the interface is quite simple once you get used to it. Basically, this kind of game doesn't do anything for me simply because it has cartoon-like graphics and not very good ones at that. The sound is basic. In other words, the audio portion of the entire game after the opening menu, is quite disappointing. Call me a critic, after all that's what I am, but Cybermage should not be bought for more than \$20, and \$50 is absolutely ridiculous. Sorry.

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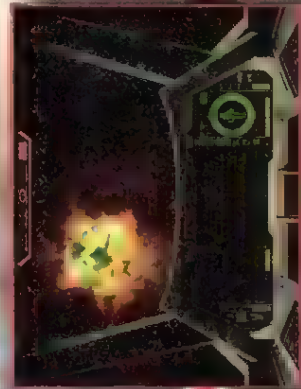
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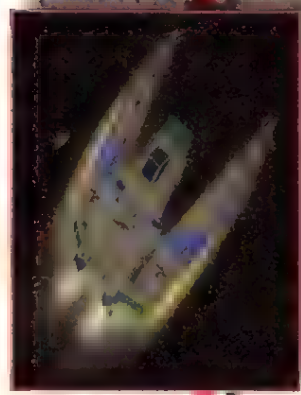
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Chinese Feud

Romance of The Three Kingdoms IV: Wall of Fire

Romance yourself as ruler of an ancient Chinese Dynasty.

Distributed by:
Koei
1350 Bayside Hwy.
Suite 540
Burlingame, CA 94010
Phone: (415) 348-0500
Fax: (415) 348-8967

Developed by:
Koei

Requirements:
386/25, 8MB RAM, SVGA,
Win3.1 or Win95, 2xCD

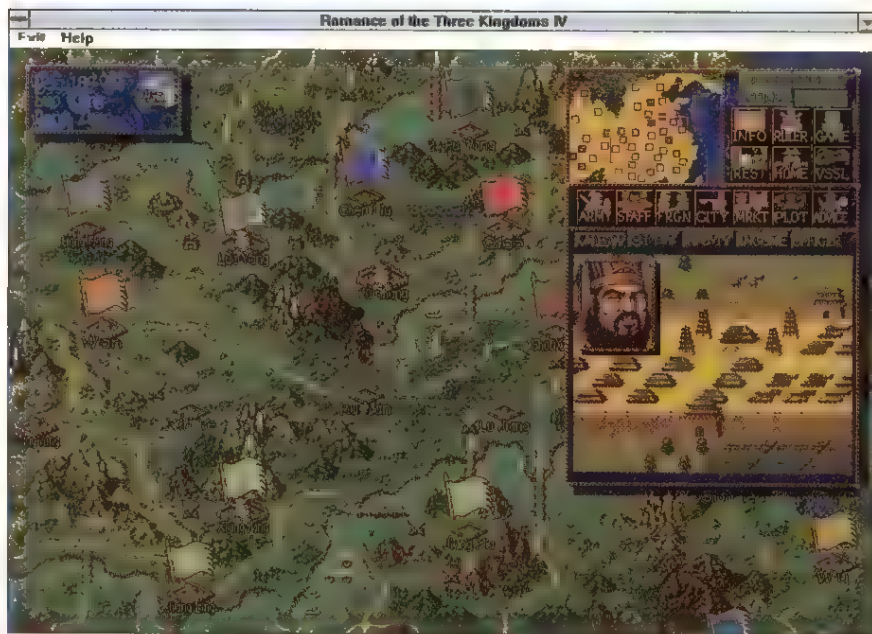
Recommended:
486/33 or higher

Controller:
Mouse or Keyboard

Number of Players:
1-8 Players

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$39.99



Average Score

69

As ruler of a provincial kingdom, you'll need to prove your administrative skills in order to win the confidence of your people. If you fail, you'll be pushing up daisies in a Chinese garden.

The Good: A whole host of Chinese characters to play with. **The Bad:** An intimidating interface will bewilder those unfamiliar with RTK III. **The Final Word:** Perfect for those who did not get enough with RTK III.

THE GAME

Travel back in time to the Second Han Dynasty, a time when China was on the verge of collapse. Feuds among the court families and the emergence of powerful warlords dominated the land. This internal struggle became known as the era of the Three Kingdoms. As a ruler during this epoch, you are responsible for unifying a country segregated by rebellion. You'll need to balance the economy and build up your military forces by recruiting members and researching new weapon technologies, such as

automatic-firing crossbows and catapults. And don't forget to employ your diplomatic skills as well, especially since negotiations will often determine the outcome of critical situations. Romance of The Three Kingdoms: Wall of Fire allows you to play as one of 38 powerful rulers (eight of whom you can create yourself), discuss war strategies with up to 588 different officers and set enemy units, ships and cities ablaze using a variety of fire commands. A built-in, on-line manual is also included.

Frank

40
Originality

65
Playability

68
Visuals

65
Audio

70
Manual

Although I'm beginning to develop a deeper appreciation for strategy war games, it's games like RTK4 that stifle my willingness to play more. I thought it was confusing just trying to keep track of all the different Chinese names, much less trying to figure out the game's interface. Since the interface was so non-intuitive and virtually hostile, I had to constantly refer back to the on-line instructional manual for guidance. The graphics appeared to be outdated, even though they were supposedly SVGA. I was most perplexed by the Duel game mode in which I could watch two Chinese warriors nack it out without my involvement. What is the point of this feature? RTK4 is for RTK lovers only.

Ted

25
Originality

75
Playability

74
Visuals

69
Audio

52
Manual

If you liked Romance of the Three Kingdoms III, you'll like Romance of the Three Kingdoms IV. That's about as nice as I can get. RTK4 has been in development since RTK3 came out two years ago, and hardly anything has changed. Koei has finally managed to get this series out of 16-color graphics and into (oooh!) 256-color graphics, and they've ported the whole thing over to Windows Big deal. The graphics are still pretty poor, although the AI is up to Koei's usual high standards. Unfortunately, the manual is a big let-down; it's hard to get a handle on what's going on before you get completely wiped out. I'd recommend this game to people who like RTK3, and just about no one else.

Scott

60
Originality

68
Playability

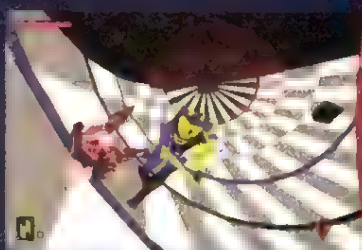
70
Visuals

71
Audio

68
Manual

Although the original premise of the game intrigued me, I'll have to say that the execution of it left me wanting a little more in the way of better graphics and faster playability. The main thing that bugged me was that I could not get into the game right away and play it. If I wanted to take all day with a manual I would play Squad Leader. The fact that RTK has a lot to do with history, and in that respect does extremely well, says a lot about the designers and their collective talents. However, as far as a strategy game is concerned, I didn't feel challenged; I felt frustrated. Why didn't someone stop them after only one or two, how the hell did they get up to IV? Was no one watching?

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Lee's Last Stand

Battleground: Gettysburg

Relive the bloody days during a turning point of American History.

Average Score

82

Distributed by:
Empire Interactive
13220 Wisteria Drive
Bay N-2
Germantown, MD 20874
Phone: (301) 916-8302
Fax: (301) 916-0437

Developed by:
TalonSoft

Requirements:
386/33, 4MB RAM, SVGA,
Win 3.1, Win95, 2xCD

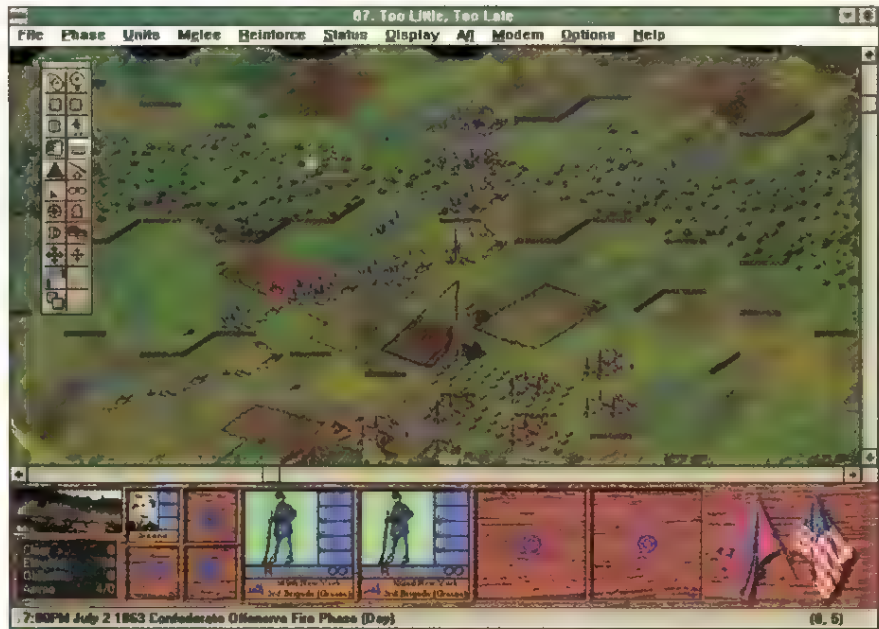
Recommended:
486/66, 8MB RAM

Controller:
Mouse or Keyboard

Number of Players:
1-2 Players

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$39.95



The Battleview interface allows players to get a bird's-eye view of the battlefield. Entire companies can be overseen as the battle progresses through the different phases, or turns of combat.

The Good: It features the same intuitive interface and AI as Battleground: Ardennes. **The Bad:** Limited scope will have Civil War buffs wanting more. **The Final Word:** The pivotal battle of the Civil War is nicely reduced to its individual components.

THE GAME

Somewhere ahead, through the smoke of battle, screams of agony are heard. Men begging for swift death litter the battlefield, their mouths speaking to the heavens, asking for forgiveness. War is truly hell on earth. As the commander of the army of the Potomac, you must guide your troops through the perils of war and emerge victorious if the Union is to survive. Or if you are of a rebellious nature, you can control the South as the general in charge of the army of Northern Virginia. Battleground

Gettysburg employs an interface called Battleview. The game includes scenarios which allow the player to re-enact Culp's Hill, Devil's Den, Little Round Top and Pickett's Charge among others. The player can jump into the fray on any particular day of a battle, or for the bloodthirsty you can fight a campaign in its entirety from first shot to the resolution of the conflict. With the SVGA graphics and the Battleview interface, players can really get into the feel of combat in the Civil War.

Frank

75

Originality

84

Playability

85

Visuals

75

Audio

70

Manual

I remember liking Battleground: Ardennes, especially for its intuitive control interface and detailed graphics. Battleground: Gettysburg possesses these same quality characteristics, as well as being historically accurate, but my only concern is the appeal factor of using the Civil War for a strategy game. Unless you're a history buff, or just really like all makes of strategy war games, it's just not that interesting or entertaining to play. I was also expecting some hardbound history book of the Civil War to be included (it adds to the overall authenticity of the game). All said, Battleground: Gettysburg is a fine product, certain to please dedicated strategy war game lovers. I'm just spoiled.

Ted

84

Originality

88

Playability

82

Visuals

76

Audio

64

Manual

Although it uses the same engine as Battleground: Ardennes, I like Battleground: Gettysburg quite a bit more. I'm not a huge fan of games based on the Civil War, mainly because most companies take the entire Civil War into account. This diminishes the confrontations to a "let's get it over with" appeal for me. However, the battle at Gettysburg was the pivotal battle in the entire conflict, and boiling it down into its individual components makes it come to life. It was an exercise in poor decisions by the South, and it's as much fun to take the South's side as the North's. The folks at TalonSoft have really done their homework, and it shows in this well-crafted introduction to the beginning of the end.

Scott

62

Originality

82

Playability

85

Visuals

70

Audio

88

Manual

I liked several elements of the game play. First of all the graphics are good, and the action clips in the film box are fairly smooth. They are not too varied, but they are smooth. The interface was difficult to get used to at first, but after a few minutes it became fairly straightforward. The sounds also attracted my attention in a rather negative way in that there simply weren't enough of them to go around. For a game that is supposed to capture the feel and essence of the Civil War's most pivotal battle, I was rather disappointed. Perhaps I ask too much when I say that Battleground: Gettysburg could have been more of a game than it is. It could have had more action, sound and a better AI engine.

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Simply Beastly

Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within

Gabriel Knight returns to face the horror of the werewolf.

Distributed by:
Sierra
3380 146th Pl. SE, Ste. 300
Bellevue, WA 98007
Phone: (206) 649-9000
Fax: (206) 641-7617

Developed by:
Sierra

Requirements:
486/33, 8MB RAM, SVGA,
DOS 5.0, Windows, 2x CD

Recommended:
486/66, 16MB RAM

Controller:
Mouse

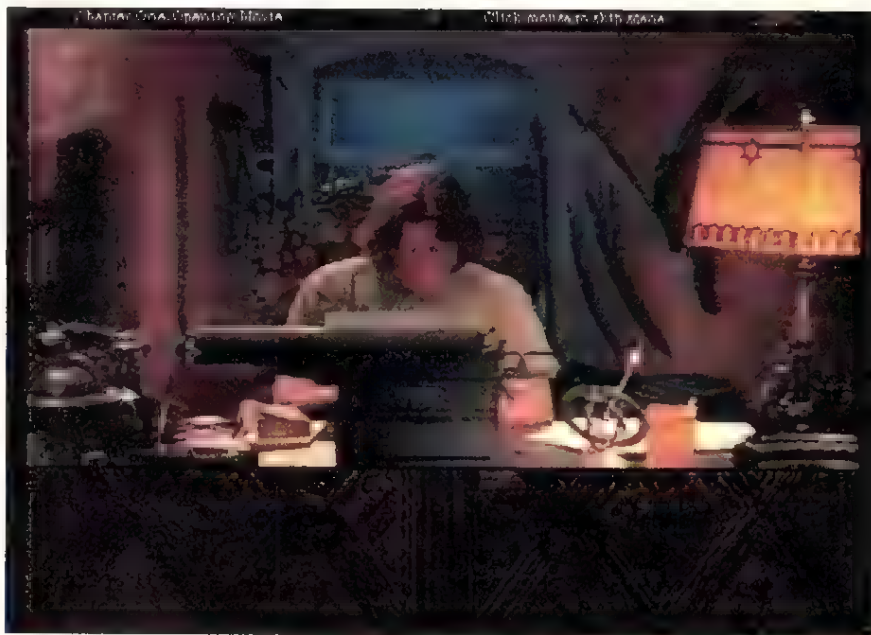
Number of Players:
1 Player

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$54.99

Average Score

94



All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. [sigh] I hate writer's block...

The Good: A compelling story and decent puzzles. **The Bad:** We still miss Tim Curry. **The Final Word:** Sierra's move to full-motion video in adventure gaming pays off big.

THE GAME



You solved the Voodoo Murders in New Orleans more than a year ago, a case that brought you close to the mysterious underbelly of the voodoo religion. The novel you wrote based on that mystery is currently on the *New York*

Times best-seller list (much to the amazement of your assistant, Grace Nakimura, lovable skeptic). You have money, fame and the time to write that you were so sorely lacking in New Orleans. You have also inherited the family castle in Germany, Schloß Ritter, ancestral home to the Ritter family. It has been the seat of power for the Schattenjäger, or Shadow

Hunters (the mystical name applied to the Ritter family), for several centuries now. You are currently residing in Schloß Ritter, and it is from there that you are currently working on your next novel. It's a mystery that centers around the Far East, involving—

Yeah, right. You have peace and quiet all around you, and your material needs are taken care of, right down to having household servants to cook and clean for you, tasks which you were notoriously poor at in your native New Orleans. This has put something of a damper on your creative juices, and it shows in the frustrations which roil your soul now. You've churned out who knows



Want some meat? 'Course ya do! But-sprechen Sie Deutsch?

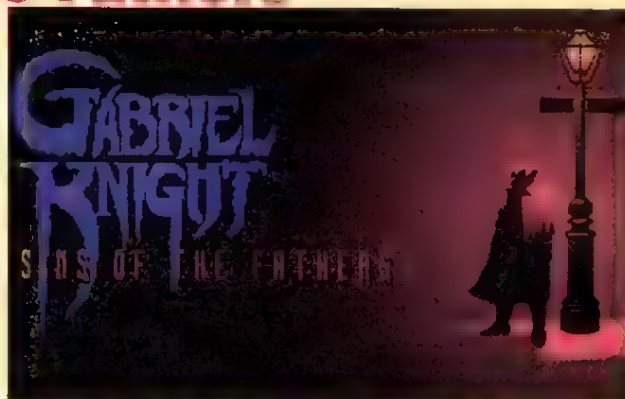
how many unsuccessful attempts at a first page for your new novel, and your writer's block simply won't go away. Even though you're Gabriel Knight, Bestselling Author, you feel like Gabriel Knight, Unabashed Hack. Tonight is no different from last night, or the night before: the premise for your new mystery continues to elude you, and piles of manuscript paper grow in unseemly wads on the floor around your overflowing

The Munich Glockenspiel is one of the attractions to visit.



Sins of the Fathers

Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers was a critical success as well as something of a cash cow for Sierra. It won numerous awards from the industry, including both CGR's and *Computer Gaming World's* Adventure Game of the Year for 1994, as well as best of show for Summer CES 1993. This dark mystery centered around a series of killings in New Orleans, LA that were popularly known as the "Voodoo Murders." The role of Gabriel Knight was taken on by the player, and Tim Curry provided Gabriel's voice. Gabriel was a struggling writer who turned to private investigation to pay his bills. As Gabriel, the player had to uncover the clues to solve the murders, talking to all of the strange characters inhabiting Gabriel's world, and searching among the voodoo shops and haunts for items to aid you in your quest. Sins of the Fathers set up the groundwork for Gabriel's mystical background as the last of the Schattenjägers, a family of Germanic background who had strange psychic abilities that allowed them to uncover and withstand the forces of the supernatural. Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within continues the saga.



trash can.

Luckily for you, you're about to be distract-



ed by exactly what brought you to your fame in the United States. Unluckily, it is a mystery that will drag you back toward the dark, dangerous side of your nature that you had hoped to put behind you when you left New Orleans. An adventure is on a collision course with you, one which only you, as the last remaining Schattenjäger, can possibly hope to resolve. An entire city lives in fear.

Of wolves.

Werewolves.

The newest Sierra adventure game is the follow-up to the award-winning Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers adventure mystery. It uses live-action video and a large supporting cast to enhance its chilling story.

The story begins with you, as Gabriel, hard at work and suffering the ravages of writer's block in your family castle in a remote area of Germany. A knock on the door begins your quest to track down a mysterious killer, purportedly a wolf as large as a man. A group of villagers enlist your aid after a small

child is killed in their village. They believe the work to be that of the supernatural, so they have immediately turned to the person they believe can confront the supernatural, the last in the lineage of the Schattenjägers: you. Other murders have also occurred nearby in recent

To players of either Phantasmagoria or Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers, the interface will seem very familiar. If you're new to adventure gaming, though, you won't feel left out in the cold.

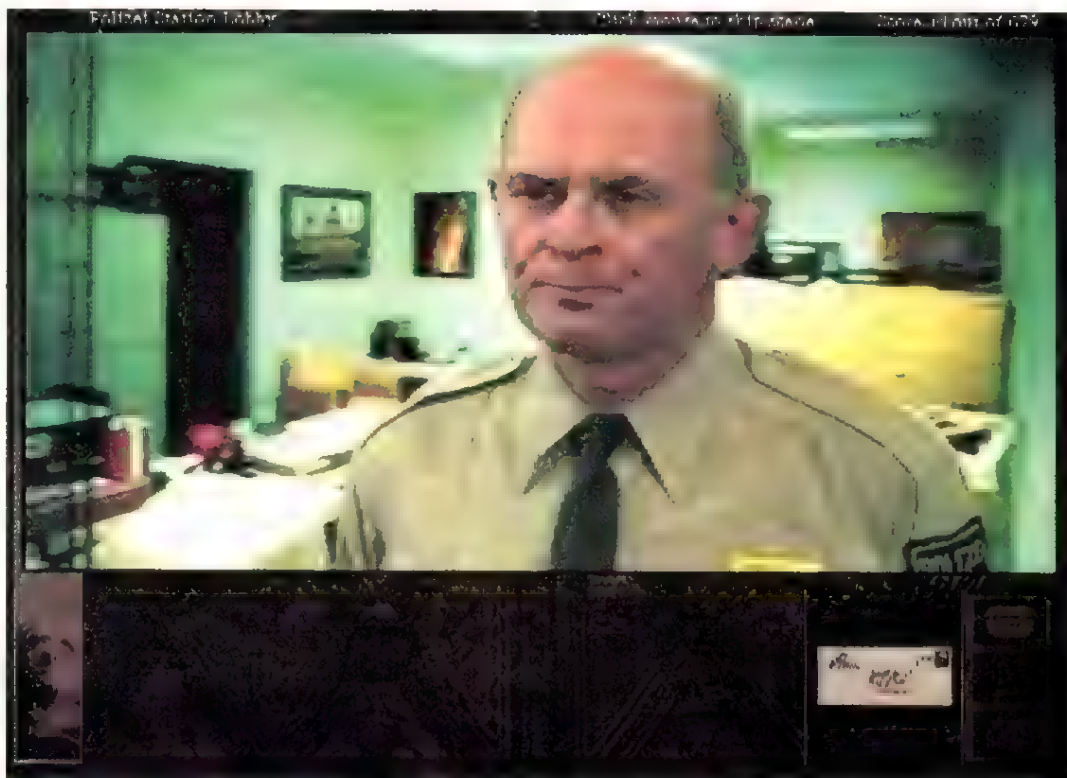
months, you learn, in which the victims have been mauled by what appear to be wolves. Though two wolves have escaped from the confines of their zoo pen in nearby Munich, the police do not believe the recent spate of

killings to be the work of these wolves.

Unfortunately, their investigation has ground to



a halt, as the clues they have gathered seem to point to conclusions that don't make sense.



Make it so! Oh, wait—wrong game. This nice police officer speaks no English, and won't let you see the detective in charge of the "mutilation killings" case. Can you thwart him?



A working knowledge of German is handy, but not really necessary.

You must piece together these clues and others, starting with an examination of the area where the most recent killing took place. From there, you must travel to Munich, where you'll need to knit together such widely disparate puzzle pieces as an eclectic and exclusive hunting club, a lost Wagner opera and historical references to an entity known only as "The Black Wolf" in order to avoid becoming a victim of the murderer or murderers.

Shot on location in Germany, the game is steeped in the history and folklore of that nation. Over 80 locations around Munich and



This handy subway map will help guide you to your destination.

Bavaria have been filmed, digitized and included in the bluescreen work, which was performed on the same sound stage used for the filming of Sierra's other film noir adventure game, *Phantasmagoria*. This bluescreen, live-action work sets *The Beast Within* apart from *Sins of the Fathers*; the latter was entirely animated, with live actors providing the voices of the characters. In *Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within*, over six-and-a-half hours of digitized video help to propel the story along its intended course, with several rather untimely fates awaiting those who misstep. As with many adventure games, the cautious player is the one who saves frequently.

You'll play the adventure from two different perspectives. As Gabriel, you'll be examining the clues directly relating to the so-called "mutilation" murders in the vicinity of Munich. The story from this perspective has an almost dangerous feel, eerie and palpable. The other side of the story is played from the perspective of Gabriel's sidekick from New Orleans, Grace Nakimura. When Grace learns that Gabriel is working on a new mystery without her, she immediately boards a plane for Europe. This side of the game has a more romantic, gothic feel to it, and, as Grace, you'll spend much of your time going through historical archives, including the history of the Ritter family and the background of the case in question. Your travels as Grace will take you to such unlikely places as the castle of Ludwig II of Bavaria, also known as "The Mad King."

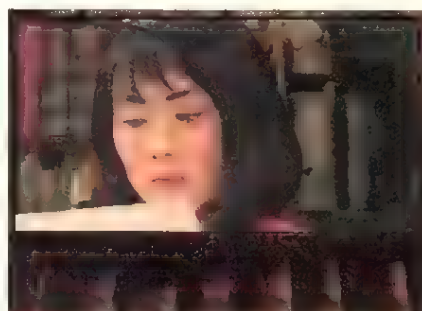
Although the main character's voice work for the original installment of the Gabriel Knight series was performed flawlessly by Tim Curry, the actor who now steps into the role, Dean Erickson, is convincing as the lead character (Sierra claims that many verbal arguments comparing and contrasting the two have broken out recently on the Internet). Likewise, the actress portraying Grace Nakimura, Joanne



While Gabriel is in Munich, Grace snoops around Schloss Ritter.

Takahashi, is excellent. Though virtual unknowns, they show an accomplished sense of direction in leading the viewer to believe their characterizations and motivations. Each brings a certain amount of quirky sensuousness to their roles, which lends itself to the offbeat style of the game.

Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within features 256-color SVGA graphics, digitized speech and live-action video, and is available on five CDs for the IBM PC and compatibles running DOS 5.0 or later, Windows 3.1+ or Windows 95. Are you able to tame the beast within?



Grace apparently has some unresolved feelings toward Gabriel.

Frank

88

Originality

90

Playability

94

Visuals

95

Audio

85

Manual

Utilizing the same interface and FMV technology as *Phantasmagoria*, Sierra has once again successfully combined an interactive movie with the playability and appeal of an adventure game. Although it's still just a hunt-for-the-hot-spot interface, it does require a fair amount of intelligence in order to complete the puzzles and progress throughout the game. The FMV graphic quality sets new standards for the industry, and the acting was convincing as well. Although I'm not entirely familiar with the original *Gabriel Knight* (I never actually played it), I thought the story worked well and it was creepy enough to spook even down-to-earth cynics like myself. Playing GK: TBW should keep you busy for many hours while you switch its six CDs throughout the game. You'll also find yourself picking up a few lines of German and familiarizing yourself with several geographic locations of Germany. Definitely one of the finer adventure games to be released to date.

Ted

91

Originality

95

Playability

94

Visuals

95

Audio

88

Manual

Sierra seems to be having a lot of fun these days with the concept of an interactive movie. *Phantasmagoria*, which some people have chided me for giving such a high score (I stand by that score), was their first attempt, and now the sequel to *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers*. Sierra has named it with GK: *The Beast Within*. This is a terrific story, and the video, Foley and music work very well to enhance the game's overall creepiness. I started playing this at about 12:30 a.m., and I found myself looking around corners and saying, "Hello?" every time I heard a noise in the building. GK:TBW's interface is startlingly similar to the original, but there are enough differences that you don't feel like you're playing exactly the same game. The puzzles are very good, and you'll feel like an insider if you speak a little German. The guy they got to play Gabriel is terrific, although most of the rest of the cast is pretty average. High marks, and a must-have.

Scott

98

Originality

95

Playability

97

Visuals

92

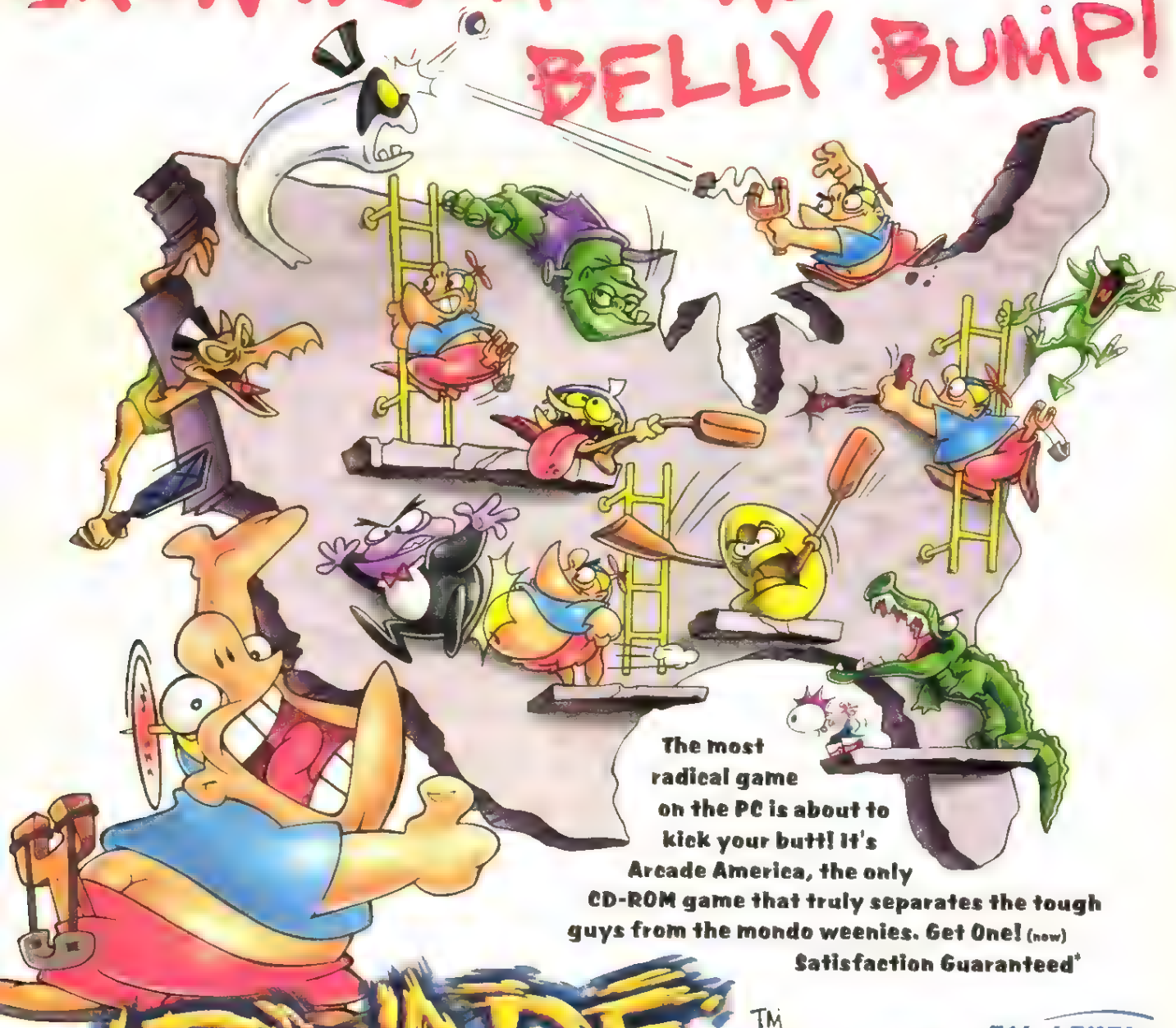
Audio

90

Manual

Most definitely one of the best games of the year. This game is one of the best that I have ever played. The interface is simple, the graphics are at some times stunningly well done and the story is fantastic. The scenery of the German countryside and the cities are picturesque and diverse, the action is intense and the plot unfolds smoothly and rather terrifyingly at times. The *Beast Within* is now on my top 10 list of games to play all the way through to the various endings. The dialogue can be skipped through for speedy game play because G.K. records all of the conversations for easy playback at a later time when you want to begin to unravel the mystery. I thoroughly enjoyed each and every moment that I was playing because the game can go as fast or as slow as you desire. I personally wanted to savor every detail because I like to figure things out on the fly rather than having to mull over the details. I'm not the best detective in the world but I had a great time. Excellent.

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Licensed to Kill

**Daryl F. Gates'
Police Quest: SWAT**

*Join the
force, meet
new and
interesting
people,
then kill
them.*

Distributed by:
Sierra
3380 146th Place SE
Suite 300
Bellevue, WA 98007
Phone: (206) 649-9800
Fax: (206) 641-7617

Developed by:
Sierra

Requirements:
486/33, 8MB RAM, SVGA,
DOS 5, Win 3.1, Win95,
2xCD-ROM

Recommended:
Pentium 60, 16MB RAM,
4xCD-ROM

Controller:
Mouse or Keyboard
Number of Players:
One Player

Available for:
PC and compatibles
Street Price:
\$54.99



You'll be glad you're on the other end of this sniper's scope when you sit down to join the ranks of the elite, licensed-to-kill members of the SWAT team.

Average Score
68

The Good: A realistically detailed simulation of SWAT team action. **The Bad:** The interface is extremely cumbersome and fans of the Police Quest series will be disappointed with the new look. **The Final Word:** Good concept, disappointing execution.

THE GAME

Prepare yourself for the most rigorous training you can find outside of the Special Forces. You are about to become part of the elite, the best of the best. A SWAT-Pup. In Police Quest: SWAT, Sierra continues its burgeoning tradition of police simulations. As a member of the L.A.P.D.'s Special Weapons and Tactical unit, you advance through training and special missions designed to hone your skills before you hit the streets. Once you are cleared for the urban jungle, you can compete for the coveted

position of team sniper. Beware, however. Once you're out of training, you'll be trusted with the lives of the innocent as well as the guilty. Police Quest: SWAT contains multiple video clips that were filmed on location using actual members of the L.A.P.D. SWAT team. Under Gates' supervision, the game is touted to adhere to the stringent regulations that occur in real SWAT training and deployment. If you're considering a career in law enforcement, SWAT will give you a taste of the real thing.

Frank

80
Originality
60
Playability
89
Visuals
90
Audio
70
Manual

Police Quest: SWAT breaks the traditional adventure game genre of its predecessors by introducing a multiple-choice, FMV interactive movie with a point-and-click interface. The first part of the game is spent educating yourself on SOP's and logging time at the firing range. The second half is spent on the streets struggling with making the right decision at the right time with its FMV sequences. The gun interface was a little unrealistic since the tiny mouse icon serves as your sight. Although SWAT is highly informative on police procedures and weaponry, it plays more like an information product than a game. Sierra should have considered its faithful PQ fans before they made this mess.

Ted

75
Originality
68
Playability
88
Visuals
89
Audio
84
Manual

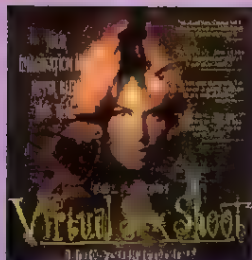
There are few things I can say that are good about SWAT, other than that I liked the completely unrelated TV show of the '70s. The biggest complaint I have is that anytime you fail a mission, you have to swap CDs. This is because there are no missions on disc 1, only training and debriefing. And you will fail almost every mission the first time you play it. Whee. Compounding this is a series of movies that you may or may not be able to click past, including some that, if you click past them, you get another movie you can't click past where all you do is get your ass chewed. This psychodrama mush is hardly worthy of the title "game;" it's more an exercise in enforced masochism.

Scott

70
Originality
75
Playability
82
Visuals
89
Audio
82
Manual

Swat was one of the games that I looked forward to playing the most this month. Unfortunately, I was slightly let down by two elements of the game. First, the graphics were extremely wobbly at times when there was a lot of action. Secondly, although I played it on a 66MHz machine with oodles of RAM, the game stuttered and stopped a few times due to lack of memory. Just to be fair, I then played it on a Pentium 133, much better. While the game touts that it can be played on a 486/33, you can bet that it will be a pain at times. Overall, I thought that the game was quite good, except that there are only three major missions. It doesn't really matter to me that there are multiple endings, I just wanted more

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harder
next time!*

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Developed by:
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Requirements:
486/66, 8MB RAM, SVGA,
DOS 5, 2xCD-ROM

Recommended:
Pentium 90, 16MB RAM,

Controller:
Mouse or Keyboard

Number of Players:
1-2 Players

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$64.95



Multiple viewing angles along with new camera utilities allow the player to really get in close to the action when it counts to have a bird's-eye view of the play execution. Nice spiral!

Average Score
77

The Good: Essentially the same as UR '95. **The Bad:** Essentially the same as UR '95. **The Final Word:** Thankfully, Accolade is killing off this series; UR '96 will be the last.

THE GAME

Unnecessary Roughness '96 follows in the august footsteps of UR '95 with several new additions. The game contains the career statistics of over 700 NFL players currently in the professional ranks, along with detailed biographies for each player. The computer AI has been updated to more accurately reflect the strategic possibilities that occur in the real world and the graphics have been punched up to (640x480) 256 color SVGA. In conjunction with the return of the first-person perspective of the Helmet-

Cam and the infinite viewing capabilities of the Infinity Cam, UR '96 introduces the Action Cam, which allows multiple viewing of individual players. UR '96 provides league play for up to 30 leagues, and also contains a Team Design Editor and a Playbook Construction Set that allows the user to modify everything from the color of the uniforms to the weather conditions and the execution of the plays. With all these improvements UR '96 has to offer, 1996 promises to be a good year for football.

Frank

40
Originality
65
Playability
85
Visuals
75
Audio
85
Manual

Having previously played Front Page Sports: Football Pro '96, I was somewhat disappointed with what Unnecessary Roughness '96 had to offer. I was most annoyed by the inconsistent keyboard/mouse interface which allowed me to use the mouse for the various menus, but required me to use the keyboard to call the plays (I appreciate consistency once in a while). UR '96's graphics made the football players appear more like tall, gawky basketball players than husky linebackers. The animation during the plays also operated at an incredibly rapid rate, causing me to refer back to the instant replay camera to see just what exactly took place. Bargain bin material at best.

Ted

25
Originality
68
Playability
82
Visuals
83
Audio
89
Manual

The latest version of Unnecessary Roughness is out, so this must be the March issue. Or vice versa. This particular version of UR is more ambitious and less successful than its forebearers. The digitized video of Jerry Markbreit is good, but Accolade apparently didn't notice that some of the calls he makes are pointing in the wrong direction. first downs, penalty calls...hey, wait a second! Every call he makes goes the wrong way, except for touchdowns, which have no directional bias. The AI is pretty darn poor, although the level of detail is decent. Thankfully, word has it that this will be the last in the Unnecessary Roughness series. Let's all pray for better football sims.

Scott

50
Originality
80
Playability
92
Visuals
88
Audio
92
Manual

By now readers know that I am a die-hard football fan, so it shouldn't be a surprise to any that I thought UR '96 kicked some serious butt. That having been said, I thought that there were a few problems with the interface, mostly because it takes a little getting used to. For instance, when I went to change the plays in the book, it took me a long time. I want a play editor that is easy to use. Overall, I thought that the game had great graphics, although it became pixelated at certain points with the game speed set on high and lots of action going on on the field. The sound effects in general were good, but then again how many different ways can one say the word "Grrr?"



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One Tough Noodle

Earthworm Jim

*Experience
the action
and
adventure
of a
cosmic
night-
crawler.*

Distributed by:
Activision
11601 Wilshire Blvd.
Suite 100
Los Angeles, CA 90025
Phone: (310) 473-9200
Fax: (310) 479-4005

Developed by:
Kinesoft Development

Requirements:
486/33, 8MB RAM, SVGA,
Win95 native, 2xCD-ROM

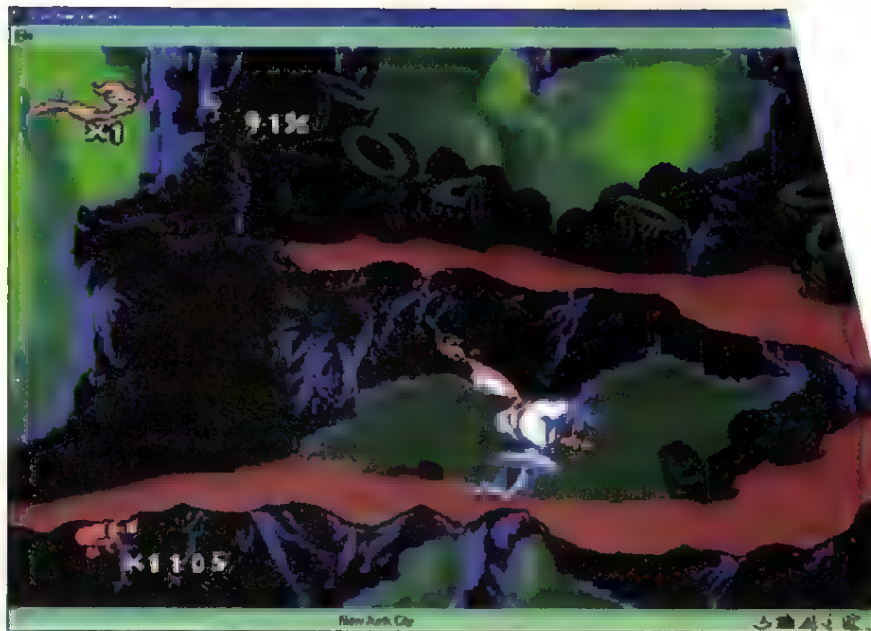
Recommended:
Same as above

Controller:
Keyboard or Gamepad

Number of Players:
One Player

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$49.95



"The early bird gets the worm," and you most certainly wouldn't want to be Earthworm Jim at this very moment.

The Good: He's a hunka hunka burnin' worm. **The Bad:** Still a few animation glitches in Windows 95. **The Final Word:** If you found Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure entertaining, you'll want to check this one out.

THE GAME

Meet Earthworm Jim. Once just a lowly and spineless dirt-eater with no real purpose in life other than to keep the soil fertile and the birds fed, Earthworm Jim was struck by a cosmic twist of fate when an ultra-high-tech-indestructible-super-space-cyber-suit happened to find its way into his slimy path. Donning this newfound piece of fashion wear, Earthworm Jim was instantly transformed into a studly superworm with powers beyond those of mortal night-crawlers. And Earthworm Jim's mission in

life is to save the lovely Princess-What's-Her-Name by avoiding the abominable Psy-Crow and defeating the ominous Queen Slug-for-a-Butt in a final, decisive battle. Earthworm Jim for Windows 95 features super-enhanced 256-color graphics and animation utilizing 32-bit technology for ultra-fast processing performance. Blast your way through 20 challenging levels with Earthworm Jim's plasma-blaster and homing rocket. The hilarious nonstop action will keep you playing for hours.

Frank

84
Originality
86
Playability
90
Visuals
88
Audio
86
Manual

Earthworm Jim plays essentially the same as Pitfall, with the exception that you control a multilegged worm instead of Pitfall Harry Jr. Graphics and animation are all top-notch, and the scrolling screen will have you wondering if you accidentally plugged in your Nintendo. There's also a great deal of visual humor that will appeal to both kids and adults. I, myself, was amazed at the amount of abuse Earthworm Jim could withstand, but I suppose that's just one of the advantages of being an invulnerable. Everything ran smooth on a 486/66 with Windows 95, which should convince a few people that Win95 is a viable gaming platform. Just make sure you use a gamepad...it makes playing a lot easier.

Ted

15
Originality
80
Playability
84
Visuals
81
Audio
40
Manual

Earthworm Jim has a lot going for it: Windows 95, great animations, good sound, lots of secrets, etc. However, it also has its letdowns. Its biggest downside is the depth of detail for the manual, which is incredibly poor. Basically a side-scrolling arcade or console-style game, Earthworm Jim uses essentially the same sort of technology that Pitfall: The Mayan Adventures used, only it uses them more adeptly. The occasional stall in graphics refresh is a hindrance to game play; gamers with less than stellar video cards (or systems) would do well to avoid this game. The game is engaging, although not nearly as funny as I expected it to be from hearing the EGM staff talk about it.

Scott

70
Originality
89
Playability
70
Visuals
72
Audio
49
Manual

Absolutely, positively, never in my life would I buy this game under any circumstances. Now let me tell you why. The interface is easy, but the game itself is terribly boring. I can't help thinking that this is the the same type of game that Activision started with, i.e. Pitfall, and EWJ is not any better than the 1980's games on the old Atari systems. Pitfall at least was an awesome game. Well okay, EWJ has much better graphics no doubt, but the game still lacks sophistication. I personally feel that for the money, it is extremely disappointing. Unless of course you are 7-years-old, then you'll love it. Don't drink the worm and don't play with it either. To be fair, I don't like worms. They're creepy.



(figure 1)

THE HARD WAY.



(figure 2)

THE EASY WAY.

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Recommended:
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Controller:
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Number of Players:
1 Player

Available On:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$59.95



Geez, son, hurry up! You're only doing 130 miles per hour! What kind of a sissy driver are you, anyway?

Average Score
94

The Good: Great graphics, enhanced AI, realistic system requirements and default car setups that can actually win. **The Bad:** Can we get back to you on this one? **The Final Word:** Start your engines and head directly to your local software shop.

THE GAME



Suit up for some serious high-speed racing action with IndyCar Racing II from

Papyrus, the same award-winning developers that brought you NASCAR Racing and the original IndyCar Racing. IndyCar Racing II features the most realistic and

accurate physical model for racing on the PC.

IndyCar Racing II offers more control options to the player than did the original IndyCar Racing. For one thing, you can optimize the performance of the game for your machine by increasing or decreasing the minimum and maximum frame rates in either VGA or SVGA modes. You're also

given more control over the texturing of your racing environment.

Digitized and stereo sound effects emulate the high-pitched screams of the IndyCar engines, pitch changes of shifting gears, squealing tires and the spine-tingling sound of massive pileups.

In addition, various driving aid features have been included. Shared with IndyCar Racing are automatic shifting and braking assistance. New to this product is help with spin recovery, which will reset your car on the track after a spin-out.

IndyCar Racing II comes with 15 world-famous tracks including Long Beach, Phoenix International, Surfers Paradise (Australia), New Hampshire



Your first time behind the wheel of an IndyCar can be pretty intimidating.



Moving up in the pack requires immense skill.

International Speedway and the infamous Milwaukee Mile, a tight oval track only one mile in length. This last makes for some high-gee cornering; if you don't keep a close eye on your speed and tire condition, you'll wind up leaving a lot of your paint job on the outer barrier wall. Each of the tracks is lovingly hand-rendered for the highest degree of detail, right down to the transport trucks on the infield.



Falling behind the pack can be pretty demoralizing. Hang in there!

Papyrus has enhanced the artificial intelligence exhibited by the computer-controlled drivers on the tracks, too. In the original IndyCar Racing, you occasionally encountered situations where your computer-controlled opponents didn't know enough to get out of your way to avoid collisions. In IndyCar Racing II, your opponents will "look ahead" in order to stay up-to-date on track conditions and events. Also, and we're not saying you should do this, if you drive like a madman, the artificial intelligence engine will take over and your opponents will identify you as a threat to their safety for the duration of your exhibition of less than-stellar performance behind the wheel. Once you start driving like a sane person again, your fellow racers will cotton to you a bit better.

Strategy will also play an important role while competing against computer opponents who employ offensive and defensive racing tactics in an effort to keep you out of contention. You will need to jockey for position using your own racing tactics, such as drafting, outbraking and the inside slide. Once you've mastered these skills, you'll find yourself beating the pros at their own game.

The designers have also taken the time to make IndyCar Racing II more user friendly than its predecessor. In addition to a manual

that describes the complex equipment options in layman's terms, they have also given the player a default setup for each car (based on the track) with which the player can actually win races. In the original IndyCar Racing, the default setup for a car could never help you be a serious contender; many complaints came out about having to spend so much time tinkering with your car in the garage area before finding a winning setup. Admittedly, this is realistic, but in this case a little less realism was called for. Not everyone has the same know-how as an actual IndyCar pit crew.

For those of you who appreciate head-to-head gaming against human opponents, IndyCar Racing II is sure to turn your crank. It will be compatible with Papyrus' new multiplayer service, currently codenamed "Hawaii." This service will be able to handle 32 drivers per track. The total number of players able to access the service at the same time is yet to be determined.

IndyCar Racing II is available for the IBM PC CD-ROM and compatibles with DOS 5.0 or later, and will support VGA graphics for 486/33 machines, as well as SVGA graphics for 486/66 and faster machines. The challenge and excitement of IndyCar racing awaits you.



How can anyone see your sponsor's name when you're driving at 200+?



Air Bags Optional

Fine tuning your IndyCar can be accomplished in the Garage menu, where you can customize several different attributes that will ultimately affect your IndyCar's overall handling characteristics. Aside from the engine type and chassis design, you can determine the compound and pressure of each tire, as well as the stagger for each wheel. Fuel capacity can be tweaked to the tenth of a gallon, and by altering the position of your IndyCar's front and rear wings, you can increase its aerodynamic efficiency. Suspension can be dialed-in by tuning each shock absorber, setting the camber for each wheel and selecting a steering gear that best handles the corners. For maximum speed and acceleration, you can set each gear individually. And if you're looking for a new look, you can custom paint your IndyCar in the Paint Shop and design your own decals and logos for convincing authenticity. With the myriad of options IndyCar Racing II has to offer, you'll feel as if you just bought a brand new car. And the best part is that it's already paid for.

Frank

25 **Originality** And I thought you could only get quality driving performance like this at the arcade. IndyCar Racing II will absolutely knock your socks off with its outstanding high-speed racing action. Thanks to Papyrus taking the time to optimize their programming code, you can get realistic performance even on a 486/66 in hi-res mode. The individual race car graphics are incredibly detailed, and the various tracks are meticulously rendered. Every single aspect of IndyCar racing has been attended to, including rearview mirrors, external TV cameras, multiple driving perspectives, realistic handling characteristics and some of the most impressive crashes I've seen in a racing game. Race car fanatics will appreciate the fine tuning capabilities such as engine type, tire composition, wheel stagger and spoiler angle. And if you liked Demolition Derby, IndyCar Racing II will also let you plow into other race cars with some spectacular results. A must for the race car lover!

Ted

10 **Originality** IndyCar Racing II is pleasingly similar to IRI. The folks at Papyrus have obviously gone out of their way to be kind to those of us with older machines; although ICR2 runs better on a Pentium 133 with 16MB RAM than on a 486/66 with 8MB RAM, it is still playable on the lower-end machine. The hi-res graphics mode is nice to look at, but I'll take the hit in resolution for the performance increase. They've made their car setups quite a bit more friendly to the inexperienced; you can actually win races with the default loadout, a situation not mirrored in the original. The manual has been enhanced somewhat, with descriptions of the various car options made accessible to the layman. There has been no update to the sound that I noticed, except that the ubiquitous Al Michaels has been replaced by Paul Page, who sounds just like Al Michaels. As was true with IndyCar Racing, IndyCar Racing II is a must-have for armchair drivers everywhere.

Scott

60 **Originality** Indy Car II is fantastic. First of all, I like the speed and the action that this one has to offer. The graphics are great and there was no slowdown at all when I played at even the highest speeds. The pictures of the different tracks are extremely sharp and the tracks themselves are great to drive on. The garage option where you can soup up your vehicle, is well done indeed. The detail on the cars, especially when you trash one of them, is excellent. I had so much fun knocking the other cars out of the race that I hardly raced at all for the first hour or so. The camera replay is detailed but could have used one or two more angles of viewing for my tastes. The fact that I could not blow up the pace car as so left me a bit depressed. The action when you really race is quite exceptional, sweaty palms and all. I took third on a difficulty level that I certainly could not match anywhere else, with a standard car. An excellent game all around, but especially fun for reckless drivers.

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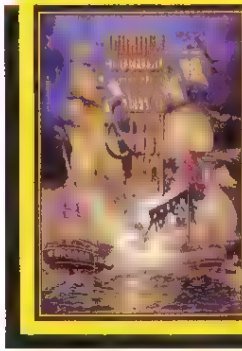
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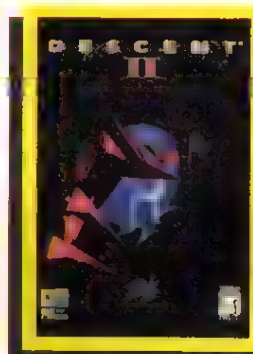
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I'll Be Back...Again

Terminator: Future Shock

*Don't look
so
surprised,
after all,
he did tell
you he'd
be back.*

Distributed by:
Bethesda Softworks
1370 Picard Drive
Rockville, MD 20850
Phone: (301) 926-8300
Fax: (301) 926-8010

Developed by:
Bethesda Softworks

Requirements:
486/50, 8MB RAM, SVGA,
DOS 5, 2xCD-ROM

Recommended:
Pentium, 16MB RAM

Controller:
Mouse or Keyboard

Number of Players:
One Player

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$54.99



The T-101 is one of the more fearsome enemies that you'll face in Terminator: Future Shock. They fire Pulse Rifles and just keep coming at you like a bad rerun.

The Good: An interesting attempt to improve upon the Doom-clone genre. **The Bad:** The final execution was pretty lame. **The Final Word:** Doom-clone veterans will cry blasphemy over the keyboard control scheme.

The Game

It is the year 2015, 20 years since SkyNet decimated the planet with a nuclear attack. You are a soldier in the resistance, and John Connor, head of the resistance is counting on you to help them in the war against the machines. Your missions range from search and destroy all enemies to complex reconnaissance deep within the heart of the machine world. Your weapons are your skill at combat and your quick thinking along with more than 12 pieces of lethal metal ranging from a lead pipe to a Phased

Plasma Cannon that can take out the side of a building. In the first of several missions, you must walk through the battlefield to complete your objectives, dodging laser blasts and hiding from robots. Later, you can hop into a jeep or fly a stolen Hunter-Killer ship to blast away at the Terminators that litter the planet. Terminator: Future Shock features more than 10 mechanized enemies whose sole purpose is to hunt you down and terminate you. Did you expect mercy from a bunch of toasters?

Frank

25
Originality

45
Playability

75
Visuals

80
Audio

80
Manual

I'm beginning to grow somewhat cynical about Doom-clones, especially those that utilize an uncommon and most unfriendly control interface. Terminator: Future Shock features a keyboard control layout that will leave you frustrated and severely annoyed. The game consists of various missions in which you have to find something and/or destroy it, but the only problem is trying to find it. You basically have to search every nook and cranny. And since the Future Shock environment attempts to be just like reality, you'll find yourself having just about as much fun as searching for a needle in a haystack. I was also unimpressed with the game's blocky graphics and pixelated explosions.

Ted

21
Originality

47
Playability

72
Visuals

76
Audio

78
Manual

This may not be common knowledge in this industry, but games are usually much more fun to play when they have an interface that not only makes sense, but works, too. Terminator: Future Shock playability suffers from a very poor interface, as well as some other interesting quirks that should have been implemented differently. For example, the automap feature, while visually compelling, is a complete waste of programming effort. It's difficult to look at, not to mention make sense of. A simple DOOM-style top-down line drawing would have been a lot handier. Although I'm sure the guys at Bethesda are very proud of their stylistic achievement, I prefer function to form.

Scott

38
Originality

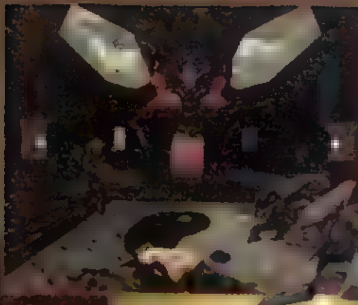
40
Playability

70
Visuals

82
Audio

75
Manual

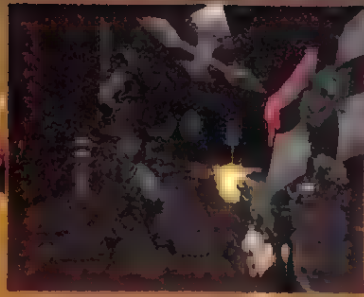
I am really disappointed that this was not as good as it looked. The first mission is great because it works. The second is an absolute nightmare to get through because the controls for driving don't work. I may be asking too much when I drop 50-odd bucks on a product that is basically nothing but ones and zeros, but I really think that Bethesda should have taken more time with this one. If only they had called us with a Beta version. Oh well, nobody's perfect. The sound was good and the missions are pretty diverse, except for the fact that the enemy AI is not too smart. I was able to predict most of the enemies' tactics with no problem. If you're looking for a good product, wait until they fix it first.



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 REALITY IS OUR GAME

Rack 'em Up!

Pool Champion

Put those pool playing skills to the test and make some extra cash.

Distributed by:
Mindscape
88 Rowland Way
Novato, CA 94945
Phone (415) 897-9900
Fax (415) 897-2747

Developed by:
Bitmasters

Requirements:
486/66, 8MB RAM, SVGA,
DOS 5, Win3.1 or Win95,
2xCD-ROM

Recommended:
Same as above

Controller:
Mouse or Keyboard

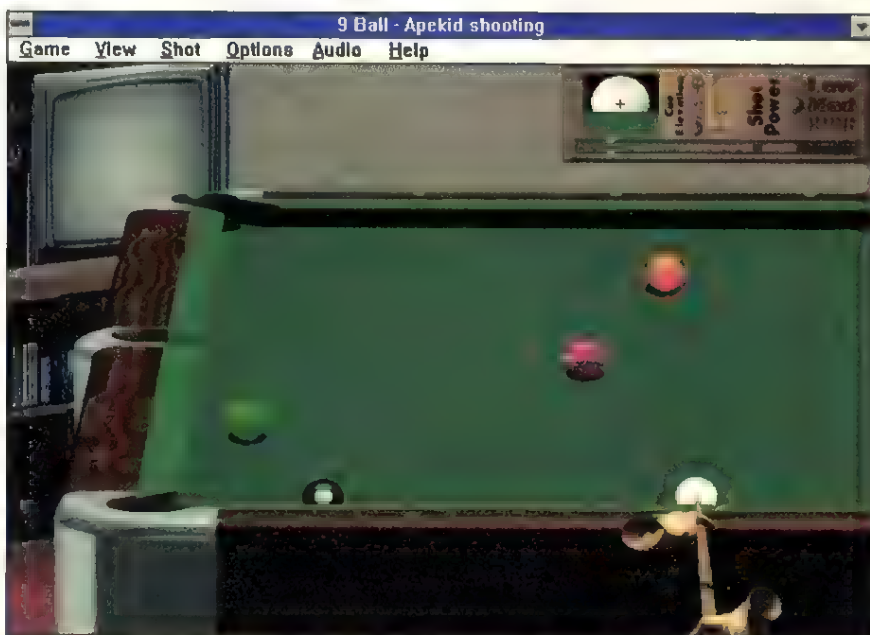
Number of Players:
1-6 Players

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$34.95

Average Score

89



Pool Champion features a variety of different playing venues ranging from a low-life biker bar to a prestigious oriental tournament hall.

The Good: Accurately simulates the feel and ambiance of playing pool. **The Bad:** Most of the music is laughably bad. **The Final Word:** Better than Virtual Pool at simulating the feel of pool.

THE GAME

Pool Champion combines an ultra-realistic pool simulation game with an intriguing adventure game. You can compete against a diverse cast of computer-generated characters at the local bar for some cash, then save up and upgrade your equipment, take some lessons or enter a tournament and fly out to Las Vegas. Pool Champion features eight different game options including 8-ball, 9-ball and Straight Pool. The physics engine and game interface offers complete control over the English, follow, draw and

masse shots. The program will also constantly update your playing and lifetime statistics, including shots, breaks and banks. Incredible SVGA animation provides a real-time, 3D player's perspective of your cue, table, balls and your environment. Pool Champion's CD-quality sound creates the ambiance of balls colliding, players chatting and a variety of easy-listening background music. So go ahead and give a career in pool playing your best shot.

Frank

83

Originality

90

Playability

94

Visuals

89

Audio

85

Manual

Since I'm kind of a pathetic pool player in real life, I was most appreciative to have all the toys that Pool Champion had to offer at my disposal. Not unlike Virtual Pool in the respect that I could accurately line up my shots beforehand, Pool Champion attempts to offer the competition and camaraderie of computer-generated characters while playing in familiar settings, such as bars, billiards and basements. I thought the graphics were a step above those of Virtual Pool, but I could do without the corny background music which sounded like Fats Domino on a Casio. Overall, I really enjoyed playing pool for the first time and I actually scored a few bucks at the local bar (in the game, that is).

Ted

75

Originality

95

Playability

91

Visuals

81

Audio

85

Manual

Pool Champion has all of the ambience that got left out of Virtual Pool. Whereas VP feels sort of dull and lifeless, Pool Champion is... well, okay, maybe not vibrant, but it offers more of the everyday business of playing pool than did VP. Opponents who taunt you, that you can get drunk; the only thing missing is the stale smell of cigarette smoke that comes from spending the evening in a billiards room. Pool Champion also gives you more forms of pool than did VP, which is a relief. The graphics are good, although the animations are kind of dumb in a cute sort of way. The thing I complained about most in VP is still not included in Pool Champion: you cannot make jump shots.

Scott

78

Originality

95

Playability

90

Visuals

80

Audio

92

Manual

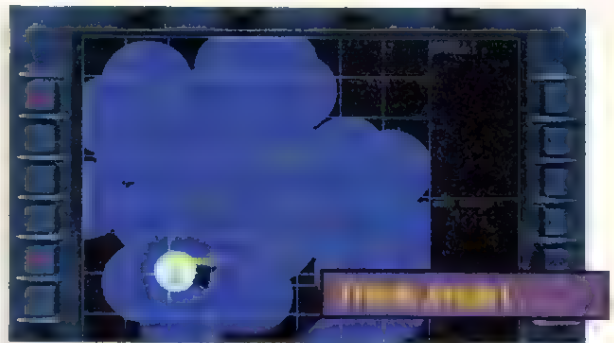
Pool Champion is great. It is rather tough at times, but overall I had a lot of fun making some pretty bizarre shots. I especially liked the different characters that you could play against and all the different things that could happen to you along the way. The graphics are good and the play of the game in general is quite fast and interesting. I would probably be able to sit at this one for about four hours straight at a time because there is so much strategy in the game of pool itself and the simulation brings a good deal of that into play. The fact that you can choose the type of music that you want to listen to is great, but it kept changing on me from time to time. If I want to hear techno, I'll turn on the radio.

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-PC Entertainment
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PC CD-ROM

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Corner the Rat!

Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat

Can you become the most powerful mercenary in the land?

Distributed by:
Mindscape
88 Rowland Way
Novato, CA 94945
Phone: (415) 897-0000
Fax: (415) 897-2747

Developed by:
Mindscape

Requirements:
486/66, 64MB RAM, SVGA,
Win95, 2x CD

Recommended:
Pentium, 16MB RAM

Controller:
Mouse

Number of Players:
1 Player

Available on:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$47.99



The Goblin Wolf-Riders make a flanking attack on Bernhard's Grudgebringer cavalry, after a charge signal from the player went awry. Note the civilian bodies littering the ground.

The Good: An intelligent AI system and missions that are tough from the outset. **The Bad:** The interface is on the very quirky side. **The Final Word:** You'll either love it or want to leave it alone.

THE GAME

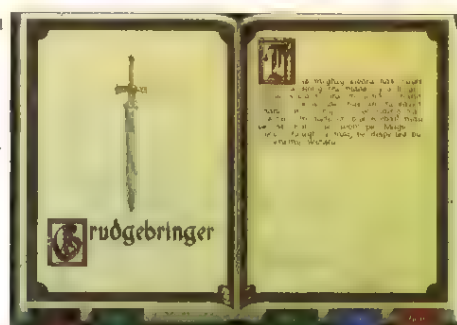
You are Morgan Bernhardt, leader of the infamous band of mercenaries known as the Grudgebringers. Your group takes its name from the mythical sword which you wield, a sword with magical powers. As you enter the world of Warhammer, your résumé is disturbingly short, and finding an employer with the deep pockets you desire will be somewhat long in coming.

Nevertheless, you are determined to bring fame and fortune to yourself and your men, and you will do what it takes to rise through the social order to command the largest army the world has ever seen.

Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat brings the popular strategy boardgame to the PC. It does so in Windows 95 format only, so if you haven't made the

jump from DOS, you won't be able to experience the thrill of running down such enemies as Goblin Stickers, Rat-Ogres, Skaven Clanrat Warriors, or the dozens of other troop types available in the Warhammer world.

The plot of Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat is a typical one for fantasy-based games. A member of the Skaven race (a race of mutated sewer rats), Thanquol, has managed to lay his scurly paws on a warpstone, a sort of 'seed of magic.' With it, he has imbued an Orcish great axe with magical powers that will increase the strength of its user.



The sword which you wield has some magical abilities. Read carefully.

However, it will also slowly turn the mind of the wielder to Thanquol's power, such that the one who commands the axe will in turn be commanded by the rat. The axe is so powerful, there can be only one who can possibly control it: the leader of the Orcs, Warboss Urgat Rip-Eye. This is exactly as Thanquol intends, for with Rip-Eye under his spell, he can command the ranks of the Orcish army and lead them on a



Cinematic cut-scenes help to drive the story.



Paymaster Dietrich balances the books for you. He will also explain the pluses and minuses of taking part in a campaign.



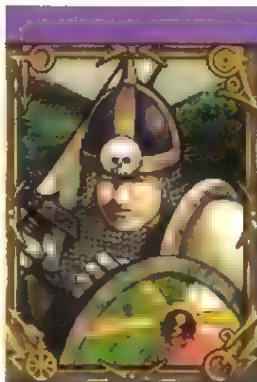
Dead Goblins litter the ground around your infantry division.

on your doorstep, wanting you to give them a try on the battlefield. You'll need to watch your spending, though, as these troops will not work for free. Sending too many troops into a battle can break the bank. Fortunately, you have an economic adviser, Paymaster Dietrich, who not only can balance the books for you, but who can also manage to do some wheeling and dealing if the amount you've been offered for a job seems to low.

Although Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat will run on the minimum system, a higher-end system is highly recommended.

path to destruction of the races most hated by the Skaven: Humans and Elves.

Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat is a real time strategy game, unlike the boardgame, which is turn-based. Although your unit commanders can handle themselves well in battle, you will be responsible for giving them their orders: who to attack, from what direction, with how many ranks, etc. You'll start out with some fairly simple battles (although perhaps "less difficult" is a better choice of words), protecting villages and riding to the aid of a local lord. As the game progresses, the storyline will branch depending on the outcomes of your battles. As you win honor points in battle, more soldiers and magic-users will appear



Schepke's Secrets

As commander of your infantry, Gunther Schepke possesses a great deal of strategic knowledge acquired through years of combat. A few tips you might wish to consider are as follows: charge enemy regiments in the flank or rear when engaging them for additional combat bonuses; avoid sending missile regiments (such as archers) and Wizards into hand-to-hand combat; make use of available cover whenever possible, especially during surprise attacks; use your cavalry regiments to block the enemy while your slower infantry units come into play; and use your Wizards to take-out serious threats such as war machines and enemy Wizards as soon as possible.

Frank

72
Originality
70
Playability
70
Visuals
60
Audio
70
Manual

When I think of real time strategy war games, I think of Command & Conquer and Warcraft II. Although billed as one of the above, Warhammer offers little in the playability and entertainment department. The non-intuitive interface will leave you wondering if this game really needs you to play it at all, especially since your troops will border on insubordination at times. The missions are challenging, if not unfair. However, the combat sequences will drag on to the point of boredom. Even the sound effects for combat are lame (they sound like dishes breaking in a banquet hall). The graphics are supposedly SVGA, but the soldiers appeared incredibly small and I had to squint just to make out what they were. On the positive side of things, Warhammer contains a great deal of on-line background information for all the different character types and magical artifacts. I'd only recommend this one for those who have previous experience with the board game. It's not Warcraft II

Ted

87
Originality
86
Playability
65
Visuals
78
Audio
81
Manual

If you've played the board game this game is based on, chances are you're going to have a little trouble getting used to the PC game. For that matter, if you've never played the board game, you're going to have a little trouble getting used to the PC game. Despite this, if you dig real time strategy at all, Warhammer is going to blow your mind. Although it's sluggish on a 486/66 with 32MB RAM, it's almost equally sluggish on a Pentium. Don't let this dissuade you. Warhammer has more going for it than your typical game. The AI is staggeringly good, and you can even launch flank attacks and have them mean something. Although the graphics are a possible quibbling point (I had to run with the absolute lowest res settings and no texture animations on the old 486), again, do not be dissuaded. If you're a fan of intelligent real time strategy, Warhammer is one of the best bangs for your buck currently on the market. It's simply amazing.

Scott

62
Originality
65
Playability
78
Visuals
70
Audio
80
Manual

Warhammer is one of those in-between games for me. I mean that my feelings are in-between liking it a whole hell of a lot and thinking that something is missing. To start with, I liked the premise of the game, and while it is not extremely original, it is interesting. I had a problem with the interface, not because it is difficult, but because in battle, there seems to be some lag time attached to the commands. I am not really sure if the enemy AI is just better than I expected or if there really is something wrong with the control. I was consistently defeated. One thing that I liked very much is the manual. It is full of background information that is an excellent intro for those unfamiliar with Warhammer. For Warhammer fans, this is good. For those of you not familiar with the fantasy world, it might just be another wargame, and not too well done. Overall, the game has many good points but the way that the controls are set up it will take some getting used to. The AI might be discouraging

It's a Rough Life

Greg Norman: Ultimate Challenge Golf

Getting tee'd off with your routine? Go hit the links with Greg.

Distributed by:
Groler Electronic
Publishing, Inc.
90 Sherman Turnpike
Danbury, CT 06816
Phone: 203/797-3530

Developed by:
Friendly Software Corp.

Requirements:
486/33, 8MB RAM, SVGA,
DOS 5, Win 3.1 or Win95,
2xCD

Recommended:
Pentium 90, 16MB RAM,
4xCD ROM

Controller:
Mouse or Keyboard

Number of Players:
1-4 Players

Available for:
PC and compatibles

Street Price:
\$39.95

Average Score

64



So you landed in the rough, eh? Well, at least the scenery is good even if your shot wasn't quite so hot. Be prepared to take an extra stroke for this bad lay.

The Good: It's the first golf game from the Shark. **The Bad:** Expect video and sound, but not at the same time. **The Final Word:** You'll need a lot of muscle in your hardware to get good results.

THE GAME

Greg Norman Ultimate Challenge Golf is one of the very first golf simulations with Windows 95 capability. It features a 3D graphics and golf simulation engine that was designed in a cooperative effort between Intel and Friendly Software. As the name would imply, Greg Norman is in the game as a sort of an assisting alter ego for the player. Greg will guide you through the Medalist Golf Course, the same course that he designed in a joint effort with Pete Dye, offering you his expertise for those impossible

shots. Players will have the opportunity to step up the excitement even further and play as Greg Norman himself. You can attempt to beat his course record of 66 using all the skills of accuracy and course management at your command. Virtually every element of play can be manipulated, including the different angles of attack on the clubs, selection of ball type and advanced shot planning, as well as calculating the effect of wind on the ball. So get ready to take on the Shark and eat up the links

Frank

45

Originality

60

Playability

90

Visuals

75

Audio

75

Manual

The folks at Groler should stick to making computer encyclopedia programs and spare themselves from embarrassment in the computer gaming industry. Greg Norman Ultimate Challenge Golf sports impressive graphics, but playability is non-existent. I appreciated the ability to fine-tune minute details, such as the composition of the golf ball, but the actual golf swing interface worked like crap. It took two mouse clicks to start my swing, and the golf ball would take to the air before my club was able to make contact with it. Playing in Simulation mode was basically Arcade mode without the uncontrollable swing bar. If you're looking for a decent golf game, check out Links 386 Pro and steer clear of this one.

Ted

40

Originality

87

Playability

90

Visuals

85

Audio

75

Manual

The Skins Game at Bighorn was the last attempt at making a Windows golf sim, and it was horrible. Greg Norman Ultimate Challenge Golf is better, although still not all it should be. I happen to like the twitch appeal of Links and JNUG; although GNUCG offers a swing meter in its arcade mode, it's poorly implemented to run in Windows. The game seems to have a tough time reading every mouse click, which makes for a lot of frustration. The graphics for the game are very pretty and the sound is okay, but the game lacks the element of fun. Even competing against the computer opponents was a worthless experience. This game is a saltine in a Ritz world.

Scott

72

Originality

75

Playability

80

Visuals

70

Audio

72

Manual

GN Golf was entertaining for a little while for me. I liked the fact that it is so completely controllable, every aspect of angle of attack, stroke management, etc. was at my fingertips. That part was excellent. However I had some very real problems with the slow transitions. Keep in mind that I played it on a Pentium 133 with a 4xCD-ROM drive going full guns. On top of the fact that the game has beautiful scenery which is very hard to get moving quickly due to the tremendous detail, the sound and the motion don't always jibe like they should. A definite problem due to the fact that it is not just off, it's way off the mark. I hit the ball, saw it launch and literally two full seconds later, heard the thwack.

LIE TO YOUR OPPONENTS.

BREAK TREATIES.

CHEAT MERCILESSLY.

**IN OTHER WORDS,
THINK OF IT AS A TRAINING
PROGRAM FOR A CAREER
IN NATION BUILDING.**



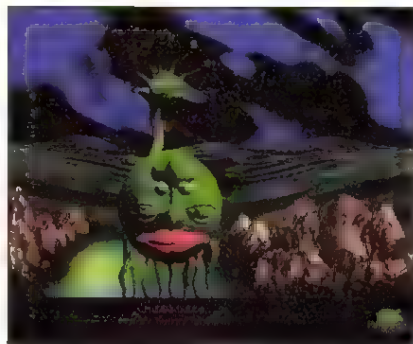
**CONQUEST OF THE NEW WORLD™
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BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.™

CNP1

CHART YOUR COURSE FOR THE INTERPLAY WEB SITE (<http://www.interplay.com>) & DOWNLOAD THE INTERACTIVE DEMO.



Eastern Mind The Lost Souls of Tong Nou

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 40-31-60

Based on the Oriental religious cosmology of reincarnation and the necessity of having to live many different lives before achieving a higher state of being, Eastern Mind: The Lost Souls of Tong Nou transmigrates the player into five reality-altering worlds for spiritual exploration. In order to find your lost soul, you must die and be reincarnated nine times in this Myst-like adventure game. Eastern Mind: The Lost Souls of Tong Nou's unique graphics and techno-house ambient music were created by Osamu Sato, a prominent graphic designer, composer, music video director and interactive CD-ROM game developer. A compu-movie, digital portfolio and profile of Osamu Sato is also included on the CD. Macintosh requirements are as follows: 68030 processor or higher, 5MB RAM, 2xCD-ROM, 13" Color Display Monitor or larger, System 7.1 or higher and Quick Time 2.0.

REQUIREMENTS

486/25 or Better, 8MB RAM, VGA, 2xCD-ROM, Win 3.1+

Publisher: Sony Imagesoft

Address: 2400 Broadway Avenue
Santa Monica, CA 90404

Phone: (310) 449-2334

Fax: (310) 449-2412

Street Price: \$44.95

Island Casino

Have you ever dreamed of taking a vacation getaway to Puerto Rico to gamble and enjoy the beauty of the world-renowned El San Juan Hotel and Casino? Well now you can with Island Casino from GT Interactive Software. You can explore the luxurious accommodations of the hotel, then make your way over to the casino to try your hand at any of the 25 world famous casino games. Choose from either San Juan Hotel style

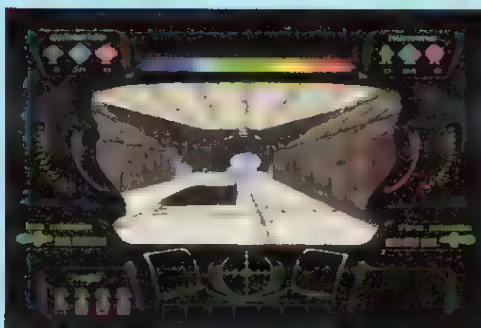


If you had \$10 on 23-red, you'd be very happy right now.

in-depth tutorial of any of the casino games, you can relax in the comfort of your own hotel room, turn on the TV and watch 30 minutes of extensive

Ice & Fire

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 57-61-52



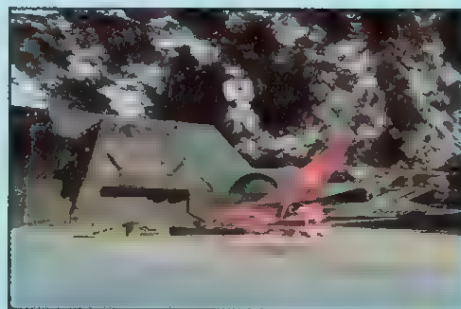
An invasion of deadly aliens, known as Spherids, have taken over a scientific research station located on an asteroid within the "Ice & Fire" binary system, threatening the lives of the crew on board. In a desperate attempt to save the crew from the Spherids, the Commander of the research station placed the entire asteroid in a state of temporary cryogenic suspension until a rescue effort could be made. This is where you come in. Equipped with only your Ice & Fire blasters, you will need to navigate a complex myriad of mazes while battling hostile aliens. You will also need to find special devices, clues and secret weapons in order to complete each level. Whether you're piloting your cruiser or making your way on foot, you will need to contain any lingering alien life forms while exploring the research station for surviving members of the crew. Ultimately, you will need to locate and rescue the Commander so that together, you can determine the cause of the mysterious Spherid Invasion.

Get ready to challenge both your mind and your trigger finger with Ice & Fire from GT Interactive Software. Developed by the creators of the original Tetris game, Vladimir Pokhilko and Alexy Pajitnov, Ice & Fire

attempts to bridge the gap between the latest sophisticated computer technology and exciting game play. Designed exclusively for Windows 3.1 and Windows 95, Ice & Fire takes advantage of 32-bit technology to deliver fully texture-mapped 3D environments, complete with advanced visual effects such as animated walls, mirrors and closed circuit TVs. This first-person perspective, action-adventure game features eight

progressively complex multilevel mazes and an Artificial Intelligence engine that will ensure hours of competitive game play. Real-time, full-motion interactive video sequences and original digital and MIDI music enhance game play. Ice & Fire also supports the Virtual i-O™ headset for a virtual reality experience.

The members of the Asteroid IF-1 research station await your arrival. Their lives now rest in your hands.



REQUIREMENTS

486/66 (Pentium Recommended), 8MB RAM (16MB Recommended), SVGA, 2xCD-ROM, Win95 or Win3.1

Publisher: GT Interactive Software

Address: 16 East 40th Street
New York, NY 10016

Phone: (212) 726-6500

Fax: (212) 679-6850

Street Price: \$54.99

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 81-78-85

on-line instructional videos on each game. Island Casino will be available for both IBM PC-compatible and Macintosh computers. So save yourself the expense and burden of traveling and check out Island Casino.

REQUIREMENTS

486/33 or Better, 8MB RAM, VGA, 2xCD-ROM, Win3.1+

Publisher: GT Interactive Software

Address: 16 East 40th Street
New York, NY 10016

Phone: (212) 726-6500

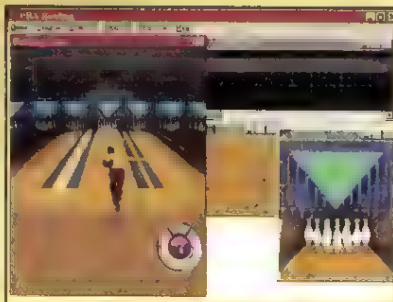
Fax: (212) 679-6850

Street Price: \$34.99

PBA Bowling

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 82-76-55

Thanks to PBA Bowling for Windows 95 from Bethesda Softworks, you will never have to wear those smelly rental shoes again. Named the official computer game of the Professional Bowlers Association, PBA Bowling brings all the enjoyment and excitement of real-life bowling to your home PC. Utilizing a sophisticated physics engine, you can control everything from spin to the power of your throw. You can monitor up to five separate windows simultaneously, displaying everything from a close-up view of the action to keeping an eye on the scorecard. You'll never have to worry about miscalculating the score either, thanks to its automatic scoring feature. Play or practice by yourself, with or against your friends or join a league in team or tournament play. There is even an optional modem module for multiplayer network competition. Customize your player's



PBA bowling covers just about every aspect of the game, sans the smoke and empty beer cans. You can even color coordinate your attire with your bowling ball.

sex, appearance, attire and the weight and color of your ball, then watch your player perform in full-motion, digitized video animation. Beginner, Novice and Pro levels will accommodate a wide range of skilled (or not so skilled...) players according to their bowling expertise. So go grab your old bowling shirt and get ready to top your best score and improve your average. And the best part is that you won't have to wait for a lane.

REQUIREMENTS

486/33 or Better, 4MB RAM (8MB Recommended), SVGA, 2xCD-ROM, Win3.1+ or Win95

Publisher: Bethesda Softworks
Address: 1370 Piccard Drive
Rockville, MD 20850

Phone: (301) 926-8300

Fax: (301) 926-8010

Street Price: \$39.95



Tang Chi

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 79-61-52

Based on an ancient Chinese puzzle game, Tang Chi challenges you to accurately replicate up to 50 different images by arranging together a variety of geometrically shaped tile pieces. By using either the keyboard or the mouse, you can maneuver, rotate and shift the different tile pieces to correctly recreate a given image on the screen. The only catch is that you are allotted a specific amount of time to complete each puzzle. The less time it takes you to complete each puzzle, the more points you are awarded. When you have successfully found the right combination, the pieces will morph together, followed by an amazing animation sequence



during which the newly created image transforms into a three-dimensional object. Tang Chi features Easy and Expert play modes, and a variety of tile textures and musical compositions from which to choose while playing. A Macintosh version will also be available.

REQUIREMENTS

486/33 or Better, 8MB RAM, SVGA, 2xCD-ROM, Win3.1+ or Win95

Publisher: Capcom Entertainment, Inc. **Address:** 475 Oakmead Parkway, CA 94086

Phone: (408) 774-0500 **Fax:** (408) 774-3995 **Street Price:** \$32.99



Jack the Ripper

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 78-68-75

The actual identity of the infamous Jack the Ripper has eluded criminologists since the first of his gruesome murders took place on August 31, 1888. Known as the Whitechapel Murders (since the murders took place within the Whitechapel and Spitalfields boroughs of London), Scotland Yard and all the Queen's men were unsuccessful in discovering enough evidence to identify the murderer. The Ripper's identity has remained a profound mystery until now.

Jack the Ripper simulates the heinous events that transpired in London during the late 19th century while providing you with the records that Scotland Yard left behind in their files. Additional clues have been planted throughout the game so that you will have the opportunity to solve the murders and name Jack the Ripper. The game is arranged as such so that you will discover a different solution to the Whitechapel murders each and every time you play. However, in order for you to succeed, you will need to employ your logic skills and consistently exercise deductive reasoning. A point-and-click interface allows you to arrange the clues and facts to construct a valid, logical solution. Multiple windows and an easy-to-use pull-down menu system enables you to efficiently manage all the evidence at hand. Long-lost photographs and blueprints have also been authentically re-created by artists. A built-in tutorial has also been included so that the player can jump right into the game without reading the manual. Perhaps you will be able to do what Scotland Yard was unable to do and find Jack the Ripper.

REQUIREMENTS

386/33 or Better, 4MB RAM (8MB Recommended), SVGA, 2xCD-ROM DOS 5.0+

Publisher: Gametek, Inc.

Address: 2999 Northeast 191st Street
Suite 500
Aventura, FL 33180

Phone: (305) 935-3995

Fax: (305) 935-9154

Street Price: \$19.95

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DESCENT

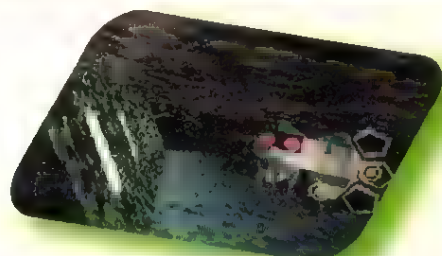
Designed for



Parallax
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30 new mind-twisting levels • 10 new destructive weapons systems including the fully automatic Gauss Cannon. • Pure 360-degree 3D madness'



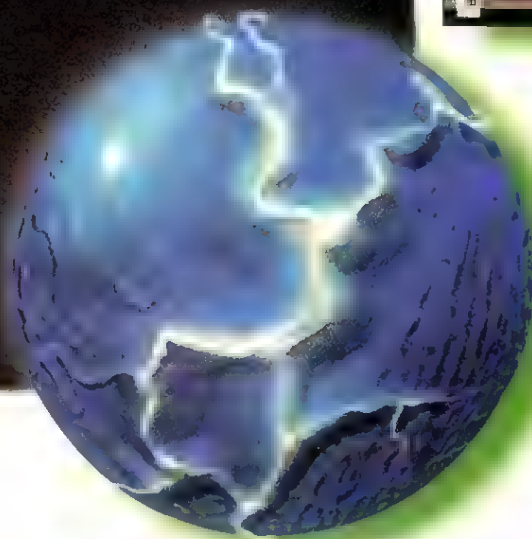
New "guidebot" ally leads you through levels.
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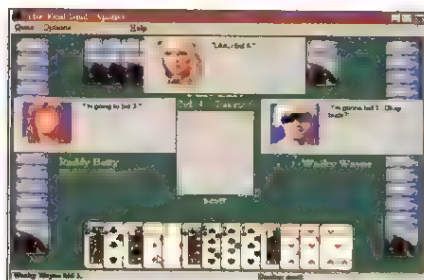
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30 new robot enemies with advanced artificial intelligence. They learn your moves, react and kill. • Modem and 8-player network play with player controlled surveillance cameras.

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<http://www.interplay.com>

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DTP2



Real Deal

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 88-84-78

Have you finally become bored with beating your computer at solitaire? If so, then check out The Real Deal for Windows 95 from Mindscape. Whether you're an expert at playing cards or just a novice, The Real Deal is certain to keep you entertained with any of its 10 classic card games, including Whist, Hearts, Spades, Euchre, Oh Hell, Pinochle, Cribbage, Thirty-One, Crazy Eights and Auction Pitch. Select your appropriate skill level, then choose your partners and opponents from a dozen candid, interactive computer characters. Each computer character will make comments throughout the game from over 1,000 different digitized remarks according to how well or how poorly you're playing. If you prefer to play against humans instead of computer-generated characters, you can connect with your friends from afar via modem/serial and network capabilities. You can even customize the table and the card deck to your own liking. The computer will automatically keep track of your wins and losses, as well as those of your opponents. There is also a variable rule option that will enable you to modify the game rules or change the value of the goal score. The game manual includes rules of play for each game, plus a handy glossary of card-playing terms. So minimize that solitaire window you're playing and take a look at The Real Deal. Who knows? Maybe you'll never go back to playing solitaire by yourself again.



REQUIREMENTS

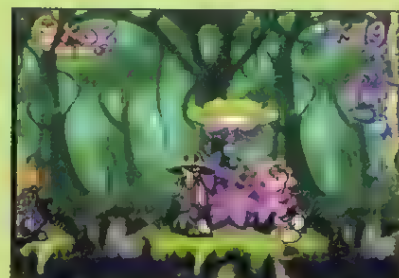
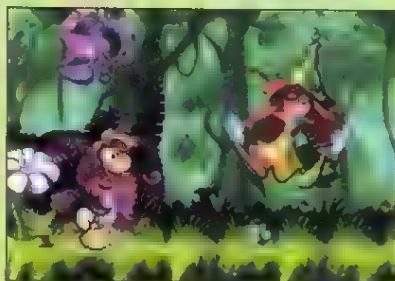
486/66 or Better, 8MB RAM, SVGA, 2xCD-ROM
Win95 native
Publisher: Mindscape
Address: 88 Rowland Way
Novato, CA 94945
Phone: (415) 897-9900
Fax: (415) 897-2747
Street Price: \$29.95

Rayman

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 85-75-82

Welcome to the wonderful world of Rayman, a place where humans and nature live together in peace and harmony. Until one fateful day when the evil Mr. Dark defeats Bettilla the Fairy and kidnaps The Great Protoon, the only person who can maintain this delicate balance with his Electroons that allow humans and nature to peacefully coexist. Now Rayman's world is infested with freaks and hostile characters who have imprisoned every one of The Great Protoon's Electroons. It's up to you as Rayman to free the Electroons and rescue the Great Protoon from the diabolical Mr. Dark and restore order to Rayman's world.

Rayman is a free-scrolling arcade platform game that features over 60 different levels of dazzling colors and stunning animation. Walk, run, jump, crawl and hang from ledges and



vines. There's even a special helicopter feature. As you progress, Bettilla the Fairy will grant you additional powers, such as telescopic arms and grabbing fists to aid you in your quest. Different power-ups are located throughout the levels to boost your energy levels and punching power. You can also collect 100 Tings for an extra life. Rayman features a save game and a game copy function for convenient game restoration. Can you help Rayman save his world?

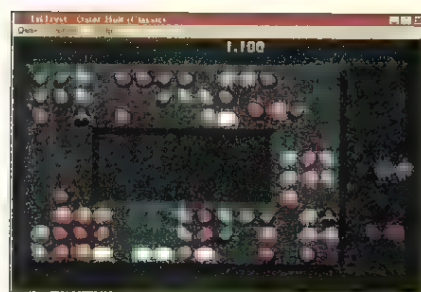
REQUIREMENTS

486/33 (Pentium Recommended), 4MB RAM (8MB Recommended), VESA Local Bus, 2xCD-ROM, DOS 5.0+ or Win 95
Publisher: Ubi Soft Entertainment
Address: 1505 Bridgeway, Suite 105
Sausalito, CA 94965
Phone: (415) 332-8749
Fax: (415) 332-8757
Street Price: \$49.95

TriTryst

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 86-88-84

Just when you thought you couldn't possibly become addicted to another PC puzzle game, in comes TriTryst, the latest mind-boggling brain-teaser from Virgin Interactive. The object of TriTryst is simple: Just line up three of the same colored tile pieces horizontally or vertically on the game board by arranging either single tiles or groups of tiles as they appear. The only catch is that the tiles keep appearing until you run out of space or time. No two games are ever the same, and you can even create your own customized game boards and impose your own time limits. Play in either single player mode, challenge your best friend over a modem/serial connection or compete with up to four of your closest friends via network. TriTryst features two different levels of game play: Normal (Strategy), where there is no time limit and you can carefully place each tile with thought and consideration; and Advanced (Arcade), where the tile pieces descend slowly from the top of the screen and stack themselves until they reach the top of the game board, thus ending the game when the stack reaches to the top of the screen. You can also choose to play in either Classic mode, where you can select any of

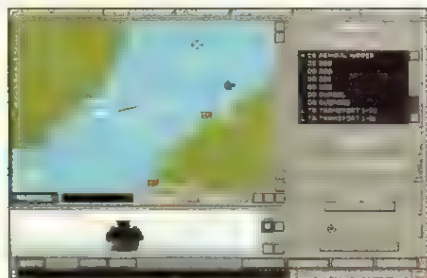


TriTryst features different kinds of game pieces and customizable game boards.

the 10 provided game boards, or in Progressive mode, where you must complete each board in order to progress to the next.

REQUIREMENTS

486/33 or Better, 8MB RAM, 1MB Video Card, 2xCD-ROM, Win95
Publisher: Virgin Interactive
Address: 18061 Fitch Avenue
Irvine, CA 92714
Phone: (714) 833-8710
Fax: (714) 833-8717
Street Price: \$24.99



Great Naval Battles Vol. IV Burning Steel, 1939-1942

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 76-62-78

Great Naval Battles™ Vol. IV: Burning Steel™ is the latest release in the Great Naval Battles Advanced Simulator Series from SSI. All major European Allied and Axis naval forces await your command in the European theater from 1939 to 1942, including the Bismark, King George V, Dunkerque, Littorio and over 130 ships from five different nations. You can create your own combat situations with the Random Battle Generator and choose from scores of historic and hypothetical engagements or devise your own with the Scenario Editor. A newly refined interface and expanded game action elevate combat engagements to a whole new level, all in dazzling 256-color SVGA graphics. Monitor the action from a variety of tactical stations such as the Flagbridge, Ship Bridge and Air Operations, then call the shots as Commander-in-Chief. The fate of WWII rests in your hand. Can you change the course of history?

REQUIREMENTS

386/33 or Better (486/33 Recommended), 8MB RAM, SVGA, 2xCD-ROM DOS 5.0+

Publisher: Mindscape
Address: 88 Rowland Way
Novato, CA 94945

Phone: (415) 897-9900
Fax: (415) 897-2747
Street Price: \$44.95

Psychic Detective

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 54-61-62

Assume the role of Psychic Detective Eric Fox and experience his mind-altering powers as you invade the minds of other people to gather clues to solve a mystery. For your first case, the Black Diamond, you will venture into a sinister, extrasensory world while discovering evil hidden agendas within the bizarre minds of your unsuspecting hosts. Employ your psychic retrocognitive powers to gather information from the past, then solve the mystery. If you lose the case, you could lose your job and your mind. Psychic Detective is the latest interactive comedy/thriller movie from Electronic Arts, featuring the latest in full-motion video technology. You will find yourself immersed within its complex, interwoven plot that will never tell the same story twice. Join the psychic network today and become your own personal psychic detective for hire.



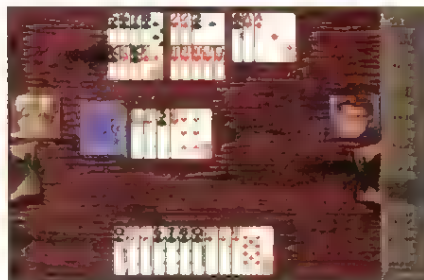
REQUIREMENTS

486/50 or Better, 8MB RAM, SVGA with 1MB RAM, 2xCD-ROM, DOS 5.0+

Publisher: Electronic Arts Studios
Address: 1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94404

Phone: (415) 571-7171
Fax: (415) 286-5080
Street Price: \$59.95

REVIEWS



Card Players Paradise

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 79-61-80

Pack your bags and get ready to travel to exotic locations around the world as you play classic card games against the world's best card players. Rummy 500, Pinochle, Bezique and Casino card games are featured, and the manual explains the rules, strategies and histories of each game. You can play against the computer or challenge a friend over the modem. If you choose to travel around the world, you can enter a tournament in each city where you can win big or clean out your savings. There are 15 cities in all to visit, beginning in New York, where you can then fly to Europe or the Far East. So if you love to play classic card games, but can't afford to travel around the world, Card Players Paradise is the perfect solution.

REQUIREMENTS

386/25 or Better, 4MB RAM, SVGA, 2xCD-ROM, DOS 3.3 or Higher

Publisher: American Laser Games, Inc.
Address: 4801 Lincoln Road
Albuquerque, NM 87109

Phone: (505) 880-1718
Fax: (505) 880-1557
Street Price: \$39.95

Wayne Gretzky

and the NHLPA All-Stars

Frank Ted Scott
RATING 51-46-55

Sharpen those skates and get ready for the fast-action thrills of Wayne Gretzky and the NHLPA All-Stars, the latest arcade/simulation-style hockey game for the PC CD-ROM from Time Warner Interactive. There are 26 North American and Six International All-Star teams, or create your own customized dream team with over 600 actual NHLPA players. You can choose to play hard-hitting exhibition games, a full 84 game season, a best-of-seven playoff series or an intense international pro

tournament. If you're feeling a little bit rusty, jump into one of the three Practice modes: Face-Off, where you can perfect your puck control, Team, where you can improve your skating, passing and shooting skills, and Shootout, where it's just you and the goalie in a sudden-death shoot-out for the victory. Play in either Arcade mode, where the action is fast-paced and the rules are scarce, or in Simulation mode, where every rule and penalty applies. And you may even find yourself in a brawl. Exclusive video clips of Wayne Gretzky behind the scenes and on the ice are included, and dual video clips will be shown simultaneously. There's even a special 3-on-3 mode to open up the ice for a quicker and higher-scoring hockey game. So go grab your favorite NHL hockey jersey and suit-up for some serious hockey action.



REQUIREMENTS

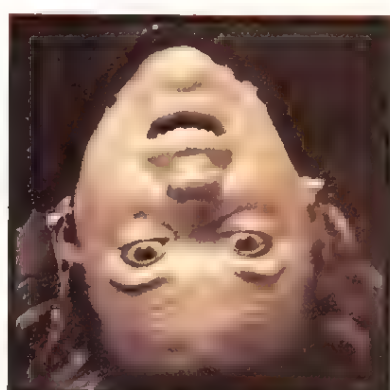
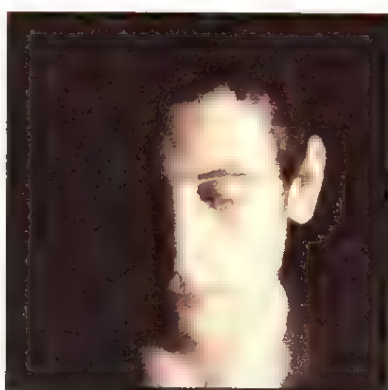
486/50 or Better, 4MB RAM (8MB Recommended), SVGA, 2xCD-ROM, DOS 5.0+

Publisher: Time Warner Interactive
Address: 675 Sycamore Drive
Milpitas, CA 95035

Phone: (408) 434-3700
Fax: (408) 434-3776
Street Price: \$49.95



Every day, nearly twenty



report having



In 1996, that number
will increase

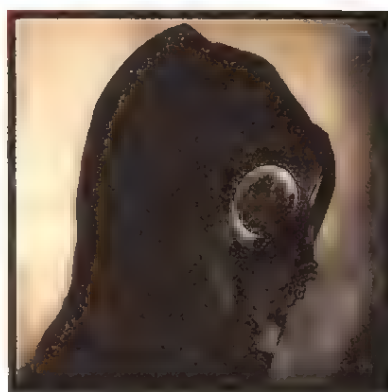
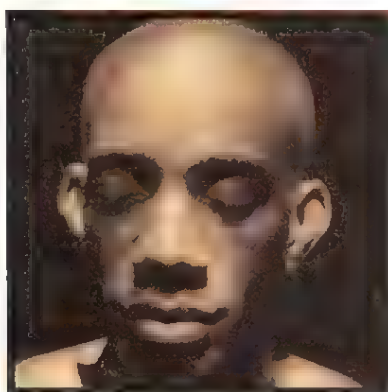


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Americans



a near-death experience.



dramatically.



Coming Feb '96 on CD-ROM for Mac & PC.



angel devoid

FACE OF THE ENEMY
<http://www.mindscape.com>

GHOST IN THE MACHINE

Mall and Maul

"I'm all lost in the supermarket; I can no longer shop happily."-The Clash

I went out this weekend to help a friend purchase an off-the-shelf system, which, to me, is torture. Imagine putting yourself through the wringer, so to speak, of some place that has less customer orientation than your average English pub. I tried to talk this friend out of it, but he needed a computer and he needed it now. Since he doesn't play computer games (shocking but true!), I reluctantly agreed to go looking at systems with him. We looked in four stores: CompUSA, Computer City, Best Buy and Elek-Tek.

The first thing you notice about a PC superstore is how poorly they're staffed. The ratio of customers to sales staff is about 30-to-1 on weekends, and only slightly better on weekdays. Then you notice how the staff acts. As I stood there, very obviously eyeing a computer system and fidgeting with my credit cards (even though I wasn't the one buying the system), I watched six staffers (all with nametags that paraphrased very clearly how they appreciated my business, or how happy they were to serve customers) pass me by without a

glance. Poor service was commonplace at every store I visited. Aggravating though it was, it was nothing compared to the intelligence of the staff.

In all my years of life I have never been to a place that understood less about what they were selling than the average PC superstore. These places are, to someone who understands PCs, hell on Earth. They hold all the appeal and ambience of your average snake-oil infested used car lot, complete with salespeople who are willing to either lie to your face or who (and this is more common) say that they don't know. Not knowing something is well and fine, *as long as you can find out the answer*. The salespeople at each store apparently were too incompetent or too lazy to find out the answers to my questions.

And I wasn't asking difficult questions. I did not ask, for example, "What's the actual access time and data throughput from the CD-ROM drive?" The sorts of questions I was asking were on the order of, "How fast is the RAM?", "Will this machine support a Mode 4 hard drive?", and, "Is Windows 95 preconfigured for the hardware that's in the machine?" This last is important, since apparently the systems that Gateway (a direct-mail company) sells have Windows 95 installed but not set up. These salespersons should have been able to answer all of these questions without blinking, or at least they should have been able to direct me to someone who did have the answers. Instead, what I mostly got was eyes shifting away from my face and a mumbled, "I'm not sure" or "I don't know."

Ah, commerce! I'm ready to lay out about four grand for a computer system, and the person I'm looking to hand a large commission to has no incentive to

try to answer my questions truthfully and accurately? I was nearly ready to demand that the store give me a screwdriver and access to all the manuals so I could find out the answers for myself.

So which store had the best staff? None of them. They all seemed to be equally ignorant, and equally uninterested in my quest (and, by association, my money). Your best bet in going to a superstore is to talk to the service techs, since they've opened up at least one of every type of machine their store sells. Don't expect them to know everything, and don't expect them to divulge all the info they have; they can be notoriously stingy with it, precisely because they *do* know what kind of crappy components go into most off-the-shelf PCs. This kind of information can kill a sale.

On the other hand, perhaps you should find the manager. If you wave enough potential cash under his or her nose, then tell them that you're shopping around at other stores, lots of useful information might be forthcoming. Who knows? I've only tried this once (several years ago) and was quickly ushered out the door. I've never gone back.

It's funny how often I mention Falcon Northwest in this section. If you're not sure what components you need, the folks there will point you in the right direction. They'll tell you the whys and wherefores of every component they install, and the pluses and minuses of almost any component you ask about. They'll build you a system that you can count on, and they'll build it for a fair price. Okay, an off-the-shelf system will probably cost you a few hundred bucks less. But the first time you run up against a hardware incompatibility or failure, you'll wish you had paid the extra money. - **Ted Chapman**



Shopping at a computer superstore can be a mind-altering experience. Common symptoms include high blood pressure, confusion and nausea.

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Cordless Wonder

The VIR One may make you rethink your decision to get a VGA-TV converter.

When I was at CES in January of 1995, there was a small Australian company showing off a product that they called "The Bird." They had Red Baron up on a 25" TV screen, and a really comfy-looking leather chair across the booth from the TV. No cables ran between the two, and yet the person sitting in the chair was controlling the action on the TV. All he had was a device that was reminiscent of the phasers used in the original *Star Trek* movie. This was my first introduction to what is now being called the VIR One.

A little background on CES is in order. The Las Vegas Convention Center is a massive place; from the front door to the far pavilions is probably a little over a quarter-mile. I had to visit companies that were spread out over this entire area, and I had to endure this for four days. Often my meetings were set up so that I had only three or four minutes to cover this entire distance. I was on my feet for most of the day, and by the end of the show, my back needed about a week to recuperate. So you can imagine what was going through my mind when I saw this haven of sitting space.

I sat down almost before the guy ahead of me had cleared his butt from the chair. "Ahhhhh" is exactly what went through my mind. Peter Walker, the president of the company, took me through the essential design elements of The Bird, which is now being called the VIR One for fairly obvious marketing reasons. Basically, it's a three-button joystick with a four-way digital keypad on top (the keypad always emulates the directional arrows on a standard keyboard). Two of the fire buttons are on the front,

and the third is located at the back, on top. The unit is an infrared transmitter; an infrared receiver plugs into the joystick port on your computer. Another surprising aspect of the design was that, even though there were fluorescents overhead at CES, nary an interruption of the IR bandwidth was seen (IR is notoriously finicky around fluorescent light sources).

One of the most interesting things about the VIR One is how much thought went into its design. Every IR game control device I've



The VIR One cordless joystick is a must-have if you use your TV as a computer monitor and enjoy flight and racing sims.

seen to date has been a standard console-type gamepad (with the exception of the keyboard on the IBM Peanut, which—oh, never mind). The VIR One has two microprocessors

which feed information to the sensor unit about how wildly you're handling the joystick. This results in better, more even performance in your software. The unit is lightweight and ergonomically designed, and has no favoritism toward handedness.

The receiver unit has a wide field of reception, as well as a switch for both linear and non-linear control (use linear control for your flight sims; non-linear should be used for driving sims, where you'll want a little more "looseness" at center). It also has a slot for docking the VIR One controller when not in use.

Ted's Take

NA	The VIR One is probably the best IR controller on the market. Its responsiveness is excellent, and it's comfortable to use. The only drawbacks to it are that it forces me to sit a little further away from my monitor than I like, and you can't (currently) hook up a second unit for two-player games. If, however, you have your computer hooked up to your TV (not entirely an uncommon occurrence), the VIR One is a godsend. No more cables snaking across the room for your friends to trip over and your cats to play with. The unit operates off of three AAA batteries, and automatically goes into sleep mode after about five minutes of inactivity (pressing a button wakes it up). I checked it out on Red Baron, X-Wing and IndyCar Racing II, and found that it was quite up to spec in both linear and non-linear modes. Although I don't particularly care for fighting games, I felt it was necessary to load one up (MK3) and test the digital keypad. This is one area where a standard gamepad works better. Although the controller worked fine for MK3, it felt unnatural.
Installation	
87	
Ease of Use	
88	
Durability	
80	
Usefulness	
72	
Manual	

HARDWARE

MultiSpin 4x4

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Available for PC and compatibles Designed by NEC Technologies

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4x4 Tackles Windows



For Windows 95 users only: the NEC MultiSpin 4x4 four-disc quad-speed changer.

Here's an interesting concept changing the CD drive marketplace. Multiple-CD CD-ROM drives are starting to come to market, and NEC has just sent me their entry. The MultiSpin 4x4 is a

quad-speed drive that holds four CDs. You can assign each drive platter a separate drive letter, or have all four platters act as one contiguous area of drive space (effectively making one CD hold up to 2.72 GB of data).

The unit is an internal implementation, a marvel of miniaturization. There are no caddies to worry about, but you also don't have to worry about knocking into a projecting ejection tray (I've done this a couple of times already with other CDDs, sometimes with disastrous results). Simply press one of the four buttons on the front panel for the platter you want; the door will open and you insert a CD about halfway in. An automatic mechanism will pull the CD inside, no muss, no fuss.

Ted's Take

89
Installation

90
Ease of Use

90
Durability

NA
Usefulness

75
Manual

I've been a DOS gamer since time immemorial, and it's been hard to give up on the old OS. The time is nearing, however, when I'll have to buckle down and face the music: Windows 95 is looming more omnipresently on the horizon. I say this in this review because, in DOS, the MultiSpin 4x4 is a big waste of money. This is because DOS is too stupid to recognize a contiguous drive (and NEC has no intention of building a DOS driver to correct this problem). In Windows 95 however, it seems to be a godsend. The W95 OS has no problems sorting out what it needs from the drive and vice versa. Since every game company on the planet seems to agree that Windows 95 is the platform of the near future, and more game companies are putting out multiple CD games, it would be silly to turn down something like this. So, my overall score for DOS users is 35, while my overall score for Windows 95 users is 92.

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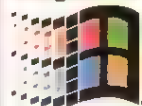


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CHAOS

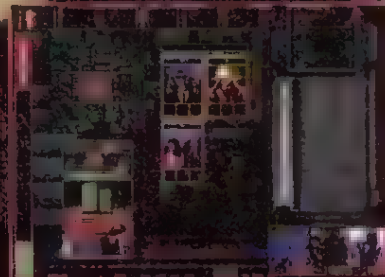
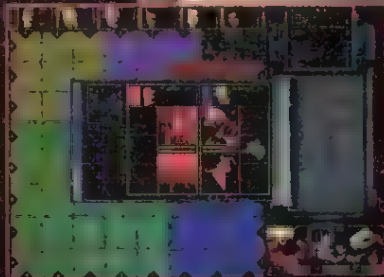
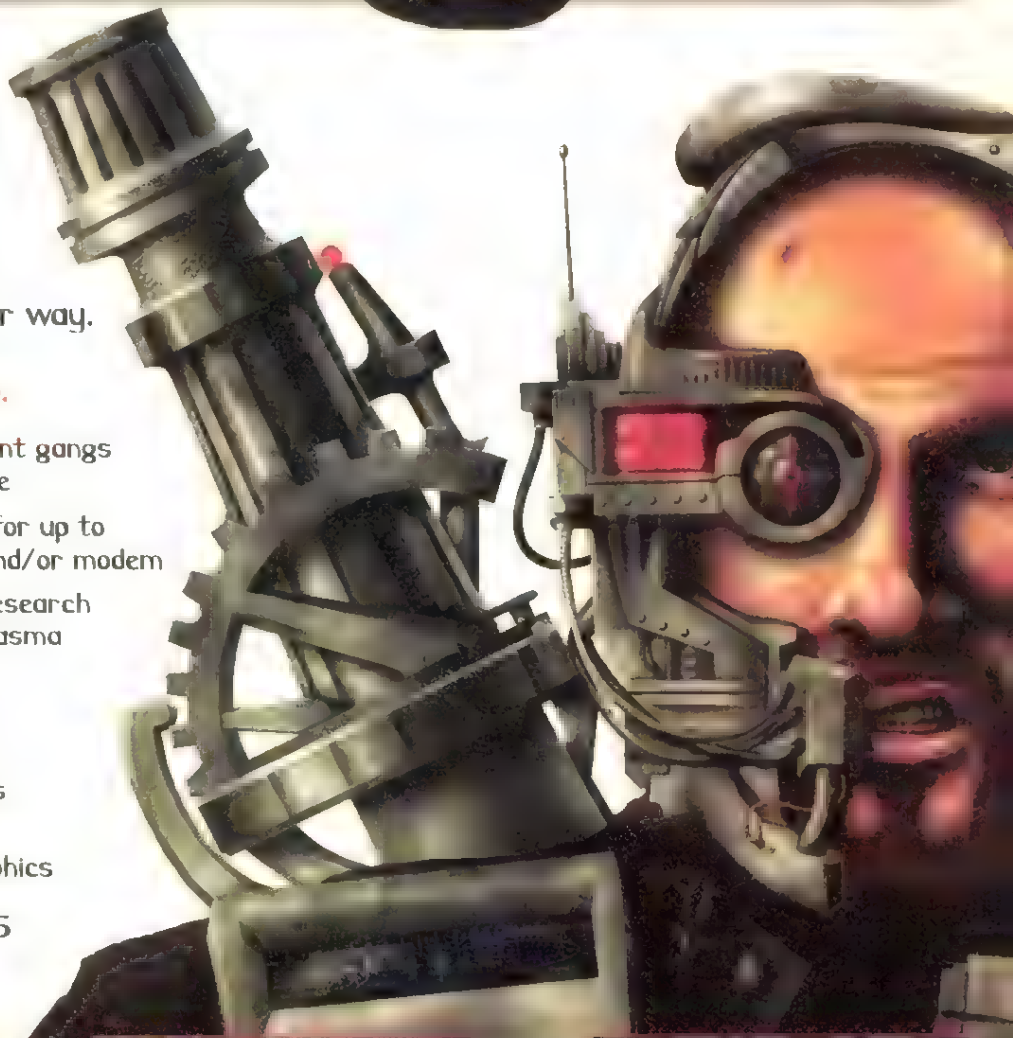
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Multiplayer, same-system gaming takes a big step forward.

Advanced Gravis has gotten the jump on everyone with their new control system, called the Gravis GrIP Game System. It consists of a base unit with plugs for four GrIP-Pads and two standard analog or digital joysticks. It plugs into the joystick port on your game card or sound card, depending on which you have incorporated into your system.

Currently, the GrIP is available in two packages, The Ultimate Team Sports Set (reviewed here) and The Ultimate Fighting Machine. Both include the GrIP and two gamepad-type controllers, but TUTSS includes NHL '96 from Electronic Arts, while TUFM has WWF Wrestlemania from Acclaim. Both have an estimated street price of \$99.95. Extra GrIP-Pads (as Gravis calls them) can be purchased for about the same price as a standard Gravis PC Gamepad, which sells for about \$19.95.

So, what's so great about the GrIP? Well, for one thing, you can plug in up to four GrIP gamepads. Under Windows 95 (though not DOS), all of the buttons on each GrIP Pad can be independently programmed. Each GrIP-Pad has eight buttons; six on the face, and two flipper buttons. No more being locked into a standard gamepad setup that feels unnatural to you. Although games must be coded to include GrIP support, I cannot imagine many companies not including it. Why? First, not only is it first on the market, it's way ahead of any other product entering the market. Second, game companies are somewhat desperate to please gamers who have gone the Windows 95 route, not to mention pleasing gamers who want same-system, multiplayer support



Want a four-player game that you can play on the same system? The GrIP Game System from Advanced Gravis could be for you.

(college students come immediately to mind). Third, and probably most importantly, it's from Gravis, the recognized leader in gamepad sales worldwide. Many games include support for the Gravis PC Gamepad; why not support the

GrIP? It's easy enough to code for.

So how can you tell if a game is GrIP-compatible? Very easily. First off, it should say so somewhere on the game's box. If you're buying your game second-hand, you can load it up;

the GrIP base unit has an LED that will change from red to green. Since EA and Acclaim are supporting it in the two titles listed above, you can almost surely count on them to turn out other games with the necessary drivers.

How big is the GrIP? I know it probably looks huge based on the picture above. In truth, though, the GrIP unit is pretty small. It will store out of the way on top of your monitor, and needs only a small space on your desktop when in use (or on your floor if you live in a dorm). It's about one-and-a-half times the size of your average Nintendo gamepad.

Ted's Talk

65
Installation
75
Ease of Use
90
Durability
75
Usefulness
10
Manual

I don't like to start out a review by bitching, but the GrIP system has about the worst manual I've ever run across. Not only is it way too simplified, it's inaccurate. Installing the GrIP for Windows 95 (for which it was originally designed) was complicated, precisely because the manual was so wrong. I finally got it working, but it took me about an hour of puzzling. After I ran through the calibration routines, I discovered that NHL96 will only run in DOS mode. This is stupid: DOS mode has no access to Windows 95 drivers. So, off it came, to be installed on a DOS system. This worked slightly better; it took me only about 15 minutes to get it going. NHL96 instantly recognized the GrIP unit, but you still have to figure out the proper control setup. Can I recommend it? Well, yes, it turns out that I can. However, be prepared for a bit of a wait before there are a lot of games you can use it with. Also, if you're a DOS user, don't count on getting the lovely programmable features that you do in Win 95. There are more than a few glitches here, but you'll eventually get your money's worth.

YOU'RE-Next Metro Times

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2050

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DAILY 90¢

DESIGNATED AREAS HIGHER



Frank "The Bullet" McCree meets his untimely demise.

Bicycle repair shop on Main St. now legendary Main St. incident. On May 26, Suzee the Bicycle Babe skidded out near the fire hydrant on Derby and Main, slipped, and landed face-down on a vomit-covered manhole. As if on cue, the manhole slid open and a pack of Sewer Rats hauled Suzee off for a leisurely mid-afternoon snack.

The Architect Guild, in a last-ditch effort to save the city's landmark structures from the crippling excesses of the Dog Boys and Crap Pukes, have pledged their support to the Bicycle Messenger's effort.

Please see MESSENGER, A17

Cashco Inc. Rejects Homeless Funding

WRITER

liber

11/17

Acid Attack Burns Overlord To A Crisp

Violence in city's underworld warfare heats up as the brutal killing of Frank "The Bullet" McCree sends shockwaves through the Northside. Responsibility for yesterday's assault remains a mystery.

By Zippy Smith, TIMES STAFF WRITER

Chaos reigns today in the Northwest District as kingpin Frank "The Bullet" McCree fell victim to a vicious acid attack and blade bludgeoning.

His body, horribly disfigured by the noxious weapon, was discovered stapled to a street sign at 10:15 pm last night by a roving band of Headbangers on their way to break up the annual Dismal Freak Ball at the County Museum.

"This hot and stanky stuff was dripping on my skull, so I looked up and there he was," stated the Headbanger who found McCree. "He looked like something that came out my butt," he further reflected. Other Headbangers who were present verified this assessment.

Experts at the scene say it looked like the work of the 7th Ave. Metal Burn Mutant Pack. But a letter pinned by a wad of gum to McCree's melted nose claims responsibility for the Happy Camper Gang in the name of their current employer, Billy "The Spike" Hernandez.

Whoever it was, they had no problem disposing of McCree's favorite hired guns, the brutal Monks of the Emerald Order. According to the Banker's Guild, sacred ritual objects from the now-defunct Order have fallen into the hands of a Used Car Salesman and are expected to fetch six figures on the black market. The Used Car Salesman was unavailable for comment but through his Faceman, disavowed any involvement in McCree's murder.

According to sources close to the grieving family, McCree was wearing his custom-fitted Kevalar Vest at the time of the attack, but it "had as much the same effect as soft butter resisting a sledgehammer and a lamb's foot." McCree was a two-bit crook who should have been left alone.



Headbanger who found McCree.

City Headed For Apocalypse Doomsday Cult Proclaims "The End Is Near"

By Stiv White, TIMES STAFF WRITER

In a direct assault on the beliefs of the followers of the Dismal

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ADD-ONS & INFORMATION

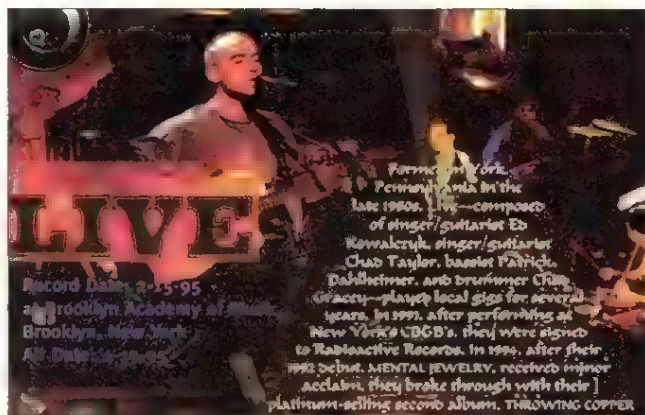
MTV Unplugged

The entire series is now chronicled on CD-ROM featuring some 70 artists

Has there ever been such a revolution of entertainment as MTV's forcibly evolving music to a video format? It just may be CD-ROMs will be the next step in music and already there is a growing library of music on computer. In its first crack at the computer market, MTV and parent Viacom New Media is releasing an all-encompassing retrospective of the *Unplugged* series with all the series guests featured with some exclusive interviews, video clips and photographs.

MTV Unplugged has three main areas of exploration: Unreleased, All Access and The Vault. In Unreleased you will be able to view videos of (they say) never-before-seen performances. These are presented in full-screen mode, but there are scant few of these. There are three full-length performances from Paul McCartney, Lenny Kravitz and 10,000 Maniacs.

All Access is for those people



who like making-of kinds of shows. Here you will be able to literally go behind the scenes and view interviews with MTV producers. They'll talk about how they set up the stage and lights. They'll show you how they get those cozy in-your-face camera shots. Also, the sound crews get their two cents worth in about how they capture the acoustic sets and all the work that goes into that. In addition, there is a smattering of artist comments on

but functional. To scroll through the list of performers you have to click on and drag in circles a lock tumbler. You can view the performers by date or name. If there are pictures of the band once you get to their screen, you can click on the picture icon to see it. Some performers have video interviews as well while others have performance video clips. All the performers have an audio sampling of the music they played during the set.

MTV Unplugged is worth the effort and money.

- Steven Greenlee



what it's like being in such an intimate setting. This segment is well done. It makes its points using video montages, slid-shows, interviews clips, audio voiceovers and then concludes with three video performance clips.

The third area to browse is The Vault. Here you'll find all the information you could ever want on the 58 *Unplugged* performances. The search interface is a little awkward

REQUIREMENTS

486/66 DX or Better, 8MB Ram, SVGA 2xCD-ROM drive, Win 3.1+

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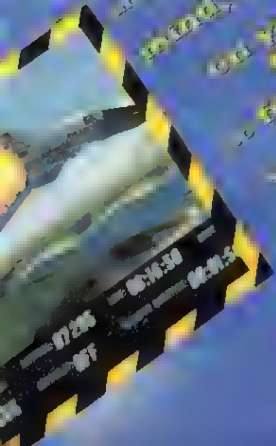
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ADD-ONS & INFORMATION

Between Earth and the End of Time

This is definitely the best CD-ROM biography I have seen. What a coup it is for ICE to get cult superstar Rodney Matthews not only to agree to a fantastic compendium of his world-famous fantasy art but to also get him to agree to a sit-down video interview where he talks about his art and the result is this CD-ROM called *Between Earth and the End of Time: The Worlds of Rodney Matthews*.

BEET: TWRM is chock-full of his fantasy art that jumps off the monitor in dazzling SVGA resolutions. Even that would be enough for me, but ICE has made a complete CD-ROM in that each piece of art can come with a variety of sub-heads. One piece of art may have Rodney explaining his inspiration for the piece, while others will have text descriptions or voiceovers narrations. The art is divided into genres (including his legendary album covers for Asia and Thin Lizzy) and we even get to take a video trip to Rodney Matthews' home in Wales to see his studio. In addition,



we can watch Matthews as he talks about his influences who include M.C. Escher, Walt Disney and René Magritte.

The soundtrack is superb and composed by his friend Rick Wakeman of Yes. Other little goodies include a built-in game called *The Quest for Tanelorn* and an utility where you can take the art and specially designed fonts by Matthews and make your own screensavers and logos. BEET: TWRM is outstanding.

- Steven Greenlee

REQUIREMENTS

486+ 8 MB Ram, SVGA, Win 95/Win 3.1 Sys 7.0, 8-bit Video, 5 MB Ram

AVAILABLE FOR: MPC or Macintosh

DESIGNED BY: ICE

DISTRIBUTED BY: ICE

575 Lexington Ave., Ste. 410
New York, NY 10022

PHONE: 1-212-572-8331

STREET PRICE: \$49.95

INTERNET: info@iceinc.com



Desktop Toys



As with many things, the computer has taken an old creative endeavor and elevated it to a whole-new level of expression and entertainment. The old art—Doodling. The new computer doo-

dler is Desktop Toys from Desktop Toys, Inc. These are very simple toys to play with that are easy in and easy out (in case the boss walks by). There are nine toys: Pablo the Painter, Splat, The Arsenal, Theodore Thumb and Spacecruiser Attack, among others. I found Splat a lot of fun. You control a spring and you bounce a vari-



ety of items like Twinkies, fish and bugs on it. Miss and they go splat on the desktop. Spacecruiser Attack is fun, too. You fly a ship around your desktop and blast it into the next quadrant. Speaking of blasting, The Arsenal is a hoot as well. You have three different weapons (a machine gun, a gun

with a big boom and a flamethrower) and with a variety of options you can make like Rambo on your desktop. I am highly cynical when it comes to titles like these, but in this case it is very nice to find an obvious exception.

- Steven Greenlee

REQUIREMENTS

486/33 or Better, 4 MB Ram, VGA, CD-ROM drive, Win 95/Win 3.1/Win NT

AVAILABLE FOR: MPC or Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Desktop Toys, Inc.

DISTRIBUTED BY: Electronic Arts

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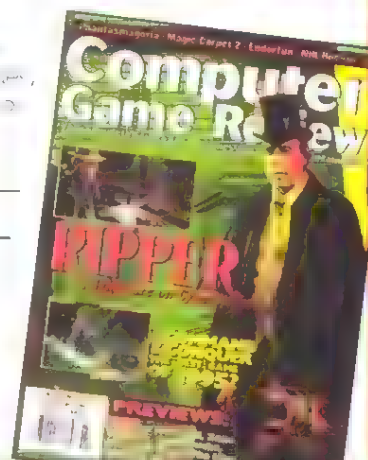
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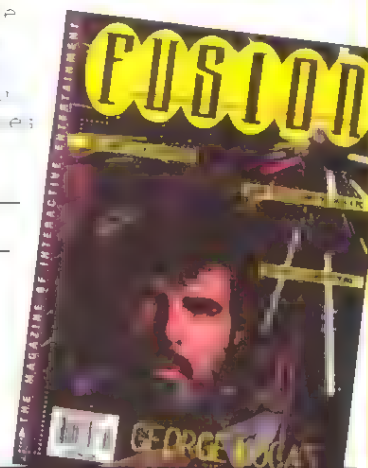
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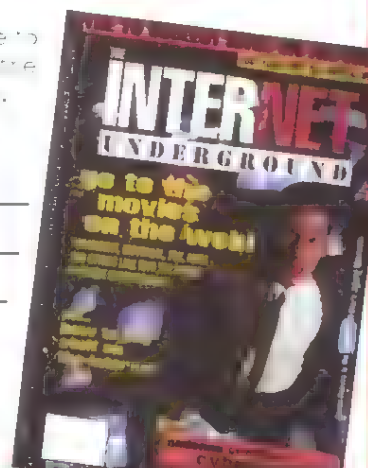
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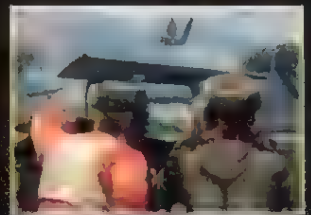
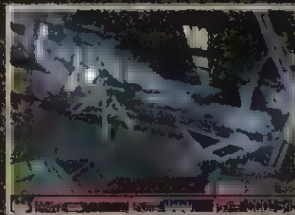
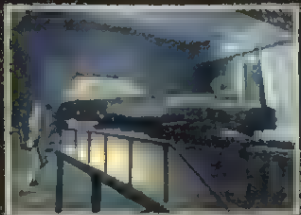
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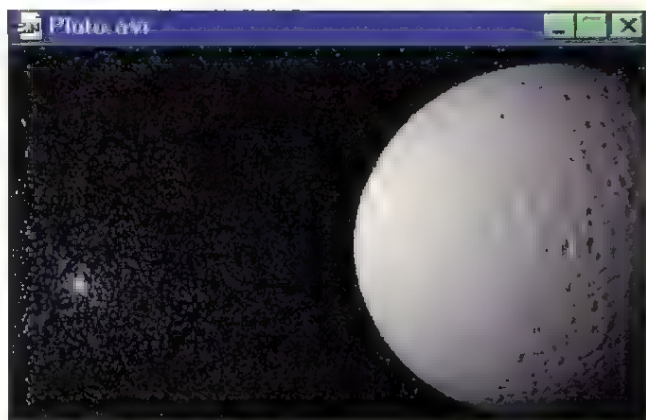
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The Planets

If the future is foretold in the stars, then you might want to see what's out there first before making plans for the rest of your life. Bryon Preiss Multimedia and Simon & Schuster Interactive are co-publishing Scientific American Library's *The Planets*, the first in a planned series of CD-ROM titles from Scientific American.

This CD-ROM is based on the best selling book by David Morrison, chief of the Space Division at NASA's Ames Research Center. There are several areas of exploration and a new kind of activity for a title in this genre. The new activity is Solar System Kit. In this area you can build your own planet or star. Dr. Donald Goldsmith, host of the PBS series *The Astronomers*, is your video helper and commentator.

Once you have determined what the mass and composition of your proposed planet, you then must start mixing in all the elements. If you get a little too generous, say with oxygen, Dr. Goldsmith will pop up and mention that the oxygen will blow up too easily at those concentrations. You'll have to keep fiddling with the options in order to find the right mix for whatever it is you're trying to do. It is quite the

challenge to find just the right mixture to get trees or algae to grow. If you want, you can even create an environment for aliens like those featured in the recent Jonathan Frakes show *Alien Autopsy*. You might even be able to prove the aliens could exist.

The nuts and bolts of the title lie within the Observatory. Here you can view the sky at any time and from any location. Then with a click you can set the entire universe in motion and see how the planets and stars move according to the perspective you've chosen. There is an easy-to-use sub-section here that will help you locate constellations as well.

The Planetary Museum and Planetary Traveler both contain tons of pictures and 3D flybys of planets and stars. There are some 60 movies and animations with hundreds of Voyager photographs.

- Steven Greenlee

REQUIREMENTS

486-33 DX or Better 8 MB Ram, SVGA, 2x CD-ROM drive, Win 3.1

AVAILABLE FOR: MPC or Compatibles

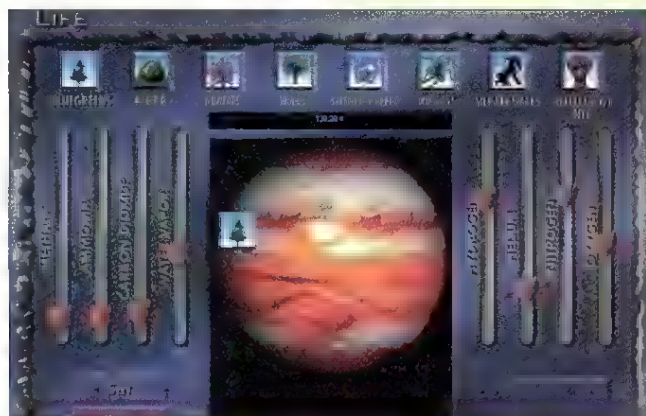
DESIGNED BY: Bryon Preiss

CONTRIBUTED BY: Simon & Schuster
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

PHONE: 1-212-698-7000

STREET PRICE: \$54.95

INTERNET: hmpc@aol.com

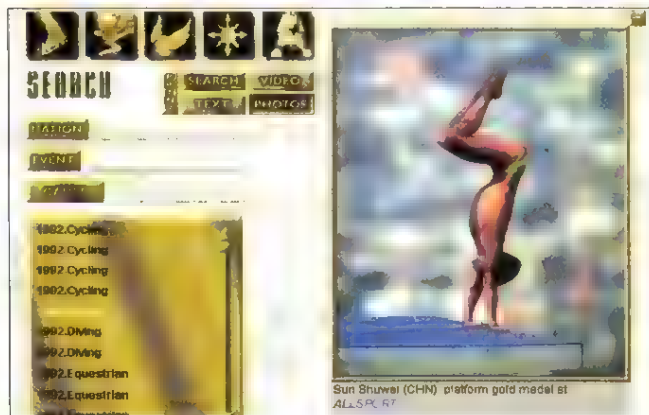


Olympic Gold

Olympic fever is beginning to rise because the Summer Olympiad will be held this year in Atlanta. As part of the festivities celebrating 100 years of the games, The Discovery Channel is publishing S.E.A. Multimedia's Olympic Gold, a retrospective of the events and athletes who began the modern game era in 1896 in Athens, Greece.

This is a completely searchable database with some 16,000 medal

If you don't feel like performing any tasks, let the program do the walking for you in the Guided Tour area. This will load up a multimedia tour of each Olympic Game. If you don't want to go on your own hunt, click on the Athletes icon on the main menu screen. All the men and women athlete names will be loaded and so for an easy search just type in the name of the person you want or scroll through the list and double-click the name. If a more narrow search is called for,

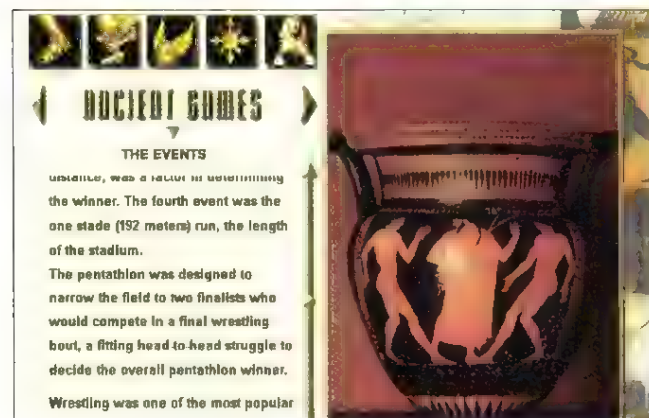


Sun Shuwei (CHN) platform gold medalist ALLSP 87

winners, the official rules of each event and information on the countries who have hosted the Summer Games. To go along with all that information are plenty of historical photographs, video clips and text documents. One way to search is by going to the Search icon and click on statistics. Here you'll find already prepared statements that

then use the filters to customize your hunt as you wish. In addition, you can search by Nation or Event, including a special area which contains exclusive information on 100 Olympic legends such as Jesse Owens and Nadia Comaneci.

The judges gave Olympic Gold a 7, 7, 8, 7, 7, 8 and a 5 from the Russians. - **Steven Greenlee**



you can combine to narrow your search. There are some 100,000 combinations and it will get you answers such as who was the youngest man to ever win a medal? The Media Search allows you to go directly to the photographs and video clips. There are some 1,700 pictures dating back to the 1896 games along with about an hour of video clips.

REQUIREMENTS

486-33 or Better, 8 MB Ram, VGA, 2xCD-ROM drive, Win 3.1

AVAILABLE FOR: MPC or Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: S.E.A. Multimedia

DISTRIBUTED BY: Discovery Channel
7700 Wisconsin Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20814-3579

PHONE: 1-800-678-3343

STREET PRICE: \$39.95

INTERNET: seagold@netvision.net.il

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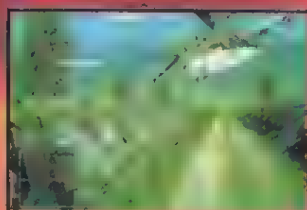
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ADD-ONS & INFORMATION

Links: Cog Hill & Links: Mauna Kea

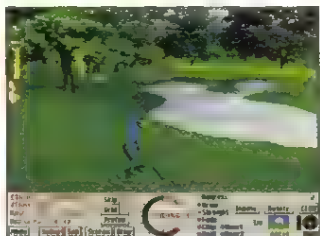
There's an old saying that you can never have enough of a good thing. While that may be debatable, it certainly holds true for the two newest releases in the Links Championship Course series. The two new ones are Cog Hill of suburban Chicago and Mauna Kea in Hawaii.

Cog Hill is a privately owned but open to the public course located about 30 miles southwest of

toward the front and is surrounded by six deep sand bunkers.

Mauna Kea has some laurels as well, being awarded the Gold Medal by *Golf Digest* as one of America's 100 Greatest resorts. This 170-acre course was designed in 1964 by Robert Trent Jones, Sr. It was photographed in late spring is so pretty it's hard to play the course.

- Steven Greenlee



Chicago. It has four regulation 18-hole courses with Course Number 4 as being the championship level. This course is host to the Motorola Western Open. The 7,073-yard par 72 course is ranked in the top 100 courses in the United States. The "Dubsread" as the course is called, has tight landing areas and heavily bunkered rolling greens. The sixth hole is the signature hole which is a long par 3 that slopes

REQUIREMENTS

486DX or Better 4 MB Ram, SVGA 2xCD-ROM drive Win 3.1/DOS 6.x

AVAILABLE FOR: MPC or Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Access Software

DISTRIBUTED BY: Access Software
4910 West Amelia Earhart Drive
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116

PHONE: 1-800-800-4880

STREET PRICE: \$29.95

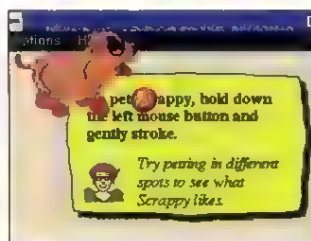
INTERNET: www.accesssoftware.com

Dogz: Your Computer Pet

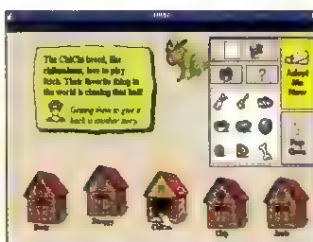
Dogz: Your Computer Pet has to be one of the more creative titles in the time-to-kill-and-relieve-stress doodle-type genre out there. What



happens is you actually adopt a dogz and at a moment's notice you can click on his dogz house. He or she immediately appears to romp and play all over your desktop. But it goes beyond just that. These dogz seem to have a personality like a real pet. All the dogz are dif-



ferent. They are born as puppies and will develop a unique look and personality as you raise them. You can feed them, play with them and



even pet them. This is a wonderful idea and as ridiculous as it sounds, you really do begin to develop an affinity for these dogz. You can carry this even one step further by going on-line with the dogz Web site and you'll be able to officially adopt your dogz and find hidden Easter eggs. Oh, did I mention they have accidents, too?

-Steven Greenlee

REQUIREMENTS

486/25 DX+, 4 MB Ram, VGA, Mouse, Win 95/Win 3.1

AVAILABLE FOR: MPC or Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: PF. Magic

DISTRIBUTED BY: Virgin
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Irvine, CA 92714

PHONE: 1-800-874-4807

STREET PRICE: \$19.95

INTERNET: <http://www.pfmagic.com>

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Blackhawk for Windows 95 and Internet Info

17,420 documents all pertaining to the Internet. This is a great collection of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions), FTP sites and how-to documents. It is true that all of the software and documents can be found on the Internet, but Walnut Creek has done all the work and again has compiled these well-organized CD-ROMS. So if you don't feel like doing all of the hunting yourself, this package will take care of the scutwork for you.

Music

Screeners:

Gloria Estefan

Contrary to the marketing hype, almost no computer monitors these days are at risk of burn-ins. Get these because you want them, not because you have to.

The screenshot shows a Windows 95 desktop environment. At the top, there's a taskbar with icons for Start, File Explorer, My Recent Places, and several open applications. The active application is a File Explorer window titled "Directory of \\d\\files\\drivers\\video". The address bar shows the path "C:\\Windows\\System32\\Drivers\\Video". The main pane lists various video driver files and folders, including:

- 8644.exe
- adv.exe
- extract.exe
- advance.exe
- boliw95.exe
- hi128i02.exe
- hi464i02.exe
- hi4m0i02.exe
- hi4v1i02.exe
- i28.exe
- nasky4.exe
- ng95x64.exe
- cb600s.exe
- seath.exe
- ti4394k.exe
- ti4396k.exe
- wc95_10.zip
- vga.exe
- viper.exe
- vsv5072n.exe
- w5w32.zip

The right pane shows the contents of the selected folder, which includes:

- Drivers for the Mach 64 card supports
- IBM XGA
- 8644A Compatible driver
- ARC Logic 100DPV 200DPV display adaptors
- Graphics Xpression PCI/wach64 and Winbook PC1 wach64 drivers
- Advance Logic ALG-3019 4 DO 461 (dispay)
- Western Digital Paradise Boliz3 accelerator driver
- Hewkeye '95 drivers for the Imagine 128 Video Card
- Hawkeye '95 drivers for the GKE64 & GKE64 Pro Video cards
- Hawkeye '95 drivers for the Motion 771/531 Vision 331 & Trio Video Cards
- Hawkeye '95 drivers for the Vision 330 and Trio Cards
- Number Nine display adaptor
- ATI Graphics Pro Turbo PCI (wach64)
- Motrox MGA Millennium display adaptor
- HP Omnibook 600
- Pinnacle Studio 64 drivers Graphics
- 210XKL 200KLI Video 210XKL 200CKL 3240KLI 3400KLI
- Trend Microsystems display adaptors
- TGUI 4440 AGI linear addressing drivers
- Trend Microsystems display adaptors TGUI 9660
- Xsi PCI TGUI 9680
- Trident SVGA drivers for Windows 95 works with 8900 and 9800 provides True-color and High-color support
- VGA Compatible driver
- Diamond Viper PCI Viper VL display Adaptors
- Viewsonic 14E5 17G5 17GS 17PS Optiquint 100P5 Optiquint 176P5D
- Video drivers for Win95 Tseng Labs
- Win95 32 bit drivers

INTERNET: screensavers@sonymusic.com

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Making **Fun** an Industry Standard

By Steve Honeywell

There is an old joke that asks, "How many Microsoft programmers does it take to change a light bulb?" One of the answers is "None—they just make darkness an industry standard." Microsoft has become a brand name that sells simply because it's Microsoft. People who know little about computers are able to trust the company, and Microsoft in turn has done a number of things to make computing easier for PC users. And while Microsoft is much better known for software products like Windows 95 and hardware like the SideWinder 3D Pro and the Microsoft Mouse, a recent turn of events at the company has also led to titles like *The Return of Arcade*.

The idea behind *The Return of Arcade* is simple.

Like the now-classic Microsoft Arcade, this new package provides players with some of the classic games that they grew up with, in this case *Dig Dug*, *Galaxian*, *Pac-Man* and *Pole Position*. While it seems strange to think about playing these games on a PC, the conversion from arcade system to Windows 95 is nearly flawless, and the games don't lose any luster despite their age.

These are not classics memory has embellished, but great games that are still great today. *The Return of Arcade* is simply fun. It is here that any serious discussion of Microsoft needs to begin these days—not with old



software ported over to a new system, but with fun.

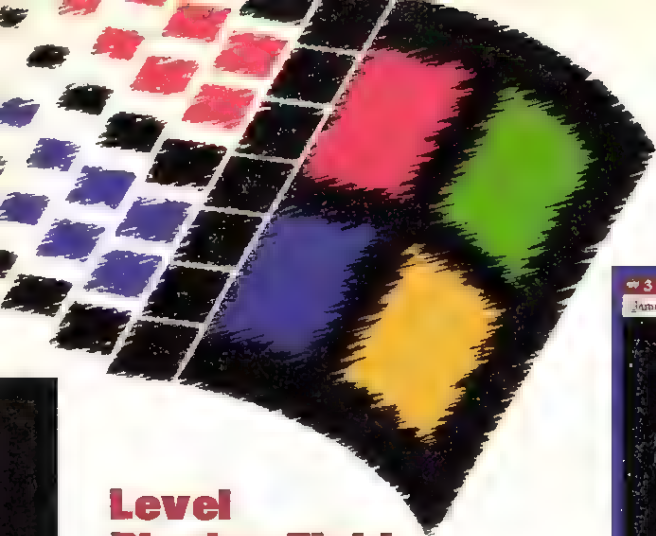
Microsoft—yes, the Microsoft headed by billionaire genius Bill Gates—is starting to look at games more seriously. In fact, the company is not simply starting to take fun seriously, it's simply making that fact known. Microsoft has been, to coin a phrase, entertaining the idea of fun software for the last four years or so, but until the creation of Windows 95, there hasn't been much reason or much ability to show it. Microsoft is dedicated to gaming. This is evidenced the creation of the Windows 95 Software Developers' Kit (or SDK) created for game designers. What is less well known is that Microsoft is jumping in with both feet in terms of creating games as well as simply

helping others create them. Microsoft will be pursuing gamers, seeking to compete in a market that it has traditionally ignored in favor of productivity software.

The major question, of course, is why? Why get involved in a market that is so traditionally finicky, small and hard to please? The answer, naturally, is money. Entertainment is a vastly growing section of the computer software market. Microsoft, having spotted that trend, has been creating the infrastructure internally over the past four years to create such a games-oriented division. Microsoft has done this by hiring veterans from companies like Sierra, EA and Activision. Put bluntly, Microsoft believes in games, and it has been deciding how to prove it for several years.

UN





Level Playing Field

Tell Microsoft's Tony Garcia that the company, despite the negative connotations the name Microsoft might have in the gaming community, has an advantage over the other game developers and he'll tell you that you couldn't be more incorrect. While it is true that the Microsoft team that developed Windows 95 is effectively down the hall from Garcia and his team of game designers and programmers, the truth is that any new tools in the Microsoft Windows 95 games SDK go out to all of the developers at the same time. Garcia even comments that the SDK team treats the Microsoft game team simply as another developer. "The folks that have been working on the operating system and the SDK have been very diligent about getting the tools out to the entire third-party developer community. They consider us to be [a third-party developer] too. Just because we are here doesn't help us." What the SDK team and the Windows 95 team are looking for is as much feedback as possible regarding the products. Bug reporting is also important to the teams, and Garcia opines that the only way to get good bug reports is to have as many people looking at the software as possible. So, while the temptation might be great to give Microsoft the advantage in regard to the more interesting tricks and shortcuts of Windows 95, the advantage isn't there.

Garcia knows something about the gaming business. Currently the Business Unit Manager of the Entertainment Business Unit of Microsoft, Garcia has been involved with the gaming industry for many years. He started programming on the Commodore 64 in 1982. Since then, he's been involved in nearly every facet of the gaming industry. Garcia has spent time working as a consultant on product evaluation and presentations for the Sega Genesis launch. He also produced *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* for LucasArts. He's been at Microsoft since 1990 and became the product unit manager for the entertainment division in 1992.

"I would challenge the presumption that we have early access [to Windows 95]," says Garcia. "We have access at the same level that the other developers do in that we influence design, we report things that we find that aren't right. When the product comes out, it's available to us at the same time." In regard to dealing with the temptation of getting the information first, Garcia comments that if he were in the same situation as the SDK developers or the Windows 95 design team, he'd be doing the same thing—sending out as many beta versions as

Old Made New

Find your old air hose and dust off the Pac-Man Fever LP. Microsoft's *Return of Arcade* features four classic arcade titles that you either grew up with or have heard about in glowing tones from older gamers. These are the games that got a lot of us hooked into becoming gaming addicts. Microsoft's Tony Garcia claims that the company created this title with the idea that many of the people who grew up with these titles are currently in the workplace with access to PCs, adding that "there's something warm and fuzzy about playing [these games] again."

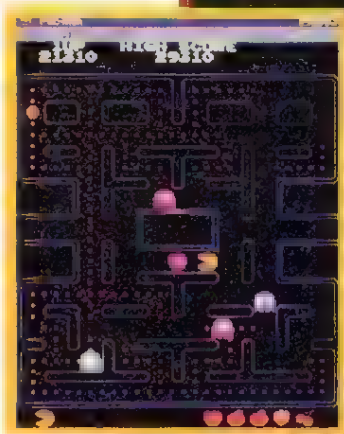
First off is one of the granddaddys of all computer gaming, Pac-Man. Amazingly popular in its time, it wasn't shocking to find arcades with 25 or 30 Pac-Man machines, all going. Books on how to beat the game were written, and as the previous paragraph implies, a song was written as well. Pac-Man also spawned several spin-off games including one that featured a pinball machine. It also launched a Saturday morning cartoon show.

Galaxian, a personal favorite of this author, is also included here. Taking a riff on the Space Invaders theme of marching aliens, in Galaxian, occasionally enemies will peel off from the main formation and attack the player's gun. Like Space Invaders, the player was glued to the bottom of the screen, making mobility a problem. Unlike Space Invaders, the enemies pulsed as they moved, making shooting them a bit more difficult. A player's tip: When a yellow flagship attacks with two red escorts, shoot the red ships first, then the flagship for the maximum points.

Pole Position is one of the original arcade racing games. All you do is simply race a car around a track as quickly as possible, passing as many cars as you can. You'll have to shift gears at the right time for peak performance, and you'll need to watch it going around curves when other cars are in the area.

Finally comes Dig-Dug. In this game, you are armed with an airpump. You must dig through the various layers of ground to come within attacking distance of your enemies. When you are in range, you can hit them with the airpump and blow them up with air until they pop. Of course, they can move more quickly than you can. Use the rocks to squash the bad guys for more points, and if possible, attack the dragons from behind so they can't use their fire breath on you.

One wonders what the Microsoft team has in store for the next incarnation of the Arcade series. We can certainly hope for Defender and Berserk. **SJH**



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he could and getting as much feedback as possible before releasing the final product. "It doesn't serve anybody's purposes to have just one group looking at it."

And while all of this feedback is important to all of the facets of the Microsoft development teams, Garcia says that whether a game is developed using the SDK or is made Windows 95 compliant is not the real issue. The real issue at hand is whether or not the game is fun. "Really, what it's going to boil down to is, 'Is the game fun? Is it a great, replayable game? Does it keep your interest?' Technology aside and plat-



form aside, gamers care about good games. That's what we concentrate on."

Garcia continues that the effort isn't necessarily on exploiting the technology for the sake of the technology. Rather, the goal is to utilize the technology as effectively as possible to create the best game possible. Without citing a specific example, Garcia alludes to games that are "technology showcases" that don't hold up in the final analysis in terms of game play. Even if Microsoft managed to keep a technology edge of six months ahead of

the other game designers, ultimately, it boils down to the game itself. Without good software to back up the technological know-how, the gamers will still be unimpressed.

Getting the Word Out

Close Combat started life as Beyond Squad Leader. In development by Atomic Games for Avalon Hill, the two companies parted ways several months ago as amicably as possible. While Avalon Hill retains the rights to the name Beyond Squad Leader, the code belongs to

Atomic. Enter Microsoft. One name change later, Close Combat is getting ready to excite military sim players around the world.

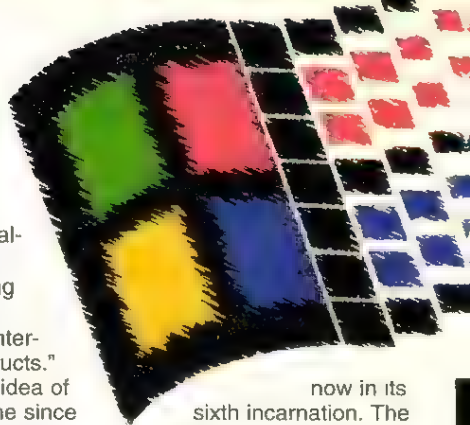
It almost seems like you might have heard something wrong there—Microsoft is interested in the more niche markets like strategy war games, provided at least that

the game in question is a good one. The traditional method of attack for large companies with little or no entertainment experience entering the gaming market is to sign up a few large licenses and try to make as big of a splash as possible. This is often because these companies don't fully understand the computer-gaming market or the computer-gaming consumers. Microsoft is trying not to make those mistakes with its move into gaming software.

Garcia is the first to suggest that Microsoft's thrust

will be to create, develop and distribute good games rather than simply high-profile games. When asked specifically about licenses, Garcia hedges, saying that the company is "mostly going to be interested in original products." Garcia adds that the idea of licenses is a tricky one since many of them turn out to be, in his words, "flaky." There is also the additional problem of having to live up to the license and the need to depend on that license. Microsoft doesn't want to have to rely on the broader appeal of a high-profile license. The game in question should speak for itself.

So instead of simply looking for the quick fix of a hot license, Microsoft has targeted several different categories to enter and produce product for. Flight simulation has been important for Microsoft since the development of the original Microsoft Flight Simulator,



now in its sixth incarnation. The company's recent purchase of BAO, a developer of realistic flight-simulation software titles like Flight Simulator, Microsoft has shown a continued dedication to this genre of games.

The desire to create and market the best product possible is important for Microsoft for a number of reasons. Primarily, the company is looking to back up its own name recognition with consumers with a positive experience and positive product. Other important categories for Microsoft are action games like the recently released *Fury*, strategy games like *Close Combat* and sports.

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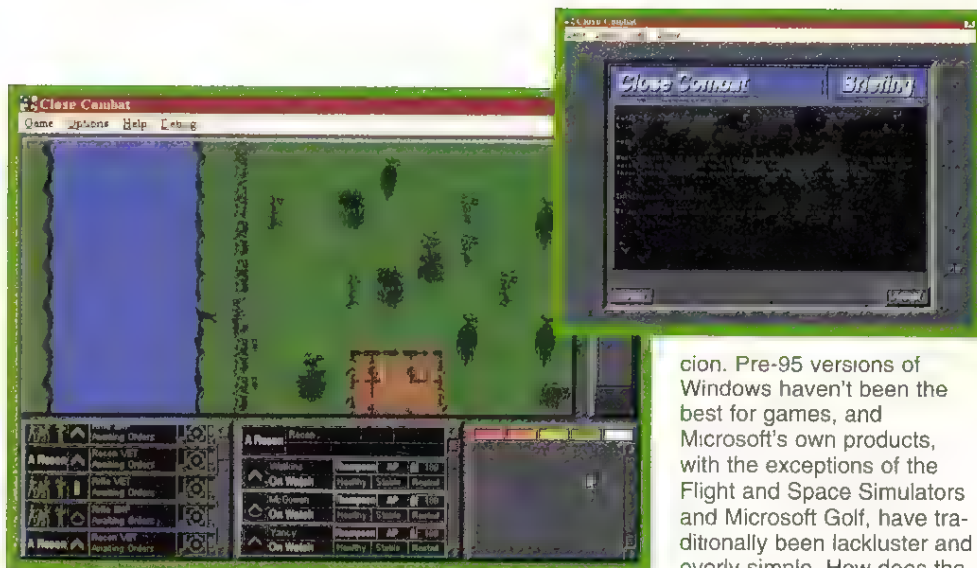
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THE NAME RECOGNITION WITH
A GOOD EXPERIENCE."**



But the interest doesn't stop there. Microsoft is also very interested in the possibilities of on-line gaming and games. Currently, a number of people at Microsoft as well as a several outside developers are working diligently at helping Microsoft reach the broader audience of the Net.

And the consumers are there for Microsoft. Because of the company's stature not only in the computer community but in the world at large, it manages brand-name recognition only dreamed of by even the largest and most successful game developer.

"One thing that Microsoft can do well is attract other users that don't consider themselves to be gamers," Garcia comments.

But there is more to this than simple name recognition. "We want to follow up the name recognition with a good experience. A lot of people in my group are thinking very hard about how we can [create a situation where] anybody can pick up a game and try it and play it and have fun with it instead of having to navigate through a manual or try to figure out some nonconventional interface. What we want to do is turn that around and make it a more pleasurable experience."

Garcia feels that Microsoft is well suited for doing just this. In fact, he thinks that one of the more important elements that Microsoft brings to the table is the company's experience in designing user interfaces, an aspect of game software that Garcia wryly suggests has been greatly lacking in the past.

And while Microsoft may have a positive connotation for the typical computer user, many gamers look at the company with some suspi-

cion. Pre-95 versions of Windows haven't been the best for games, and Microsoft's own products, with the exceptions of the Flight and Space Simulators and Microsoft Golf, have traditionally been lackluster and overly simple. How does the company manage to overcome the stigma of Windows Solitaire and Minesweeper?

Garcia doesn't worry about that, countering with the idea that "gamers themselves have seen and appreciated the fact that we have helped [create] more awareness of games since Microsoft is appealing to a broader set of people." Garcia also iterates the idea that it's not a question in the mind of the gamer where the game comes from. The overall quality of the game is of the utmost importance. "Traditional gamers...don't care as much about [where a game was] published or developed. They care about the quality of the product. If it's a great game, they'll want to play it regardless."

Because of Microsoft's prominent position, Garcia feels the company can provide a very useful service for these companies. The company's name and logo are seen everywhere, and president Bill Gates is easily one of the most recognizable figures in the world today. By taking a developer's product and putting it through the channels that Microsoft is capable of, many games will be seen by a much broader market than may have been initially attracted to them.

It is this sort of synergy that attracts companies like Atomic Games and products like Close Combat. Garcia also stresses his years of experience in the industry as well as the experience of his team in attracting games like

this to Microsoft. Contacts elsewhere in the industry have helped the company find and attract a number of titles. In many cases, says Garcia, companies seek out the assistance of Microsoft because they are excited about what the software giant can do for them in terms of marketing and distribution. The response has been very good to Microsoft's program. The company has managed to attract an industry heavyweight in the person of Larry Holland (SWOTL, X-Wing, TIE Fighter) and a premier console developer in Crystal Dynamics.

And while the consumer's reaction is obviously important to Microsoft in the positioning of the upcoming line of games, it is equally important to gauge the reaction of the other software developers. The level playing field certainly helps, but computer game designers are notoriously independent. Was there a reaction to the idea that Microsoft is providing tools to other designers, in effect arming its own competition?

Garcia says no, adding that other game designers are well aware that Microsoft is planning a much bigger position in the entertainment market. However, because of the diversity and size of the market, most developers don't feel threatened by the new, big fish in the pond. It would be nearly impossible for Microsoft to dominate the entire gaming market regardless of size and consumer loyalty.

Indeed, this is a situation many developers like Spectrum HoloByte and Electronic Arts have been in before—designing games for console systems with tools created by the makers of those systems and competing in the marketplace with that company's software. The general reaction from the other game developers has been very positive on two levels. First, the reaction to Microsoft creating product has been good. Second, other developers are very happy with the level of support they have received from the games SDK and Windows 95 teams. This, says Garcia, is very gratifying.

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Even more important than that, comments Garcia, is that the game designers are just now learning how to take real advantage of the operating system. As with any new operating system, the first rash of titles manages to make some use of the tricks, but it isn't until the second generation of product that things really start getting interesting. This is the position that Windows 95 is at right now. Garcia suggests that the titles that will be coming out over the next few months and into the summer will really start to take advantage of the system.

Facilitating this is the fact that unlike a new console system, the programmers and designers didn't have to learn an entire new architecture. The hardware behind the operating system is still an Intel-based machine. Windows 95 simply offers the designers and programmers new ways to get at and utilize that architecture.

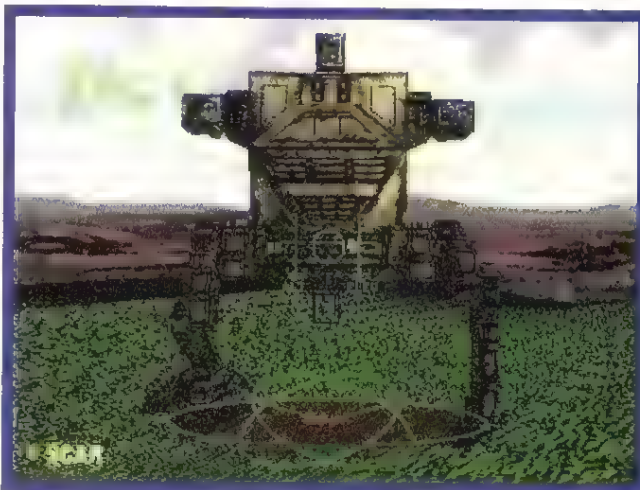
PC or Console?

Gex, created by Crystal Dynamics and designed originally for a number of console systems is in development for Windows 95 by Microsoft. Despite the amazing effects of allowing the player to walk on walls and ceilings, Gex is a classic scrolling action game, just the sort of thing that PCs are *not* associated with. But Microsoft has some designs on the console roots of Gex. Quite simply, the creation of Windows 95 has allowed game designers, including Microsoft, to provide a simple and elegant experience for gamers. In short, plug-and-play has become a reality for a system that has ever been its antithesis.

Garcia feels that plug-and-play is enormously important for the success of Windows 95 and games developed for the system. Because the gaming industry changes very rapidly in terms of hardware, gamers are constantly placed in the position of having to upgrade their systems (as virtually anyone reading this is well aware). Windows 95 accounts for that. With the



"I LOOK AT THE OPPORTUNITY OF ATTRACTING THE HUMONGOUS CONSOLE BUSINESS OVER TO THE PC..."



next generation of 3D accelerator boards coming, gamers will simply be able to plug them in and use them—Windows 95 will handle all of the configuration for them. As Garcia puts it, it's nice to let the operating system worry about the compatibility, which allows the designers to worry about the more important aspects of the game—namely, making it fun to play.

The console experience is an important one in the thinking of Microsoft's entertainment division. The idea is to create games that are, at least in the sense of getting them to work, simple and basic so that the user doesn't get frustrated with the product. This level of simplicity for the consumer is important to Microsoft's focus.

Garcia, in fact, draws the comparison of Windows 95 to the console systems because of the ease of use. However, he stresses that the significant advantage that Windows 95 has over its console relations is not only the sophistication of the hardware but also the eclectic nature of the software itself. Still, it is the ease of use that is important here. Microsoft's aim is not only to provide the players with a fun experience on the computer. The other objective is to help bring the console crowd over to the PC. Says Garcia, "I look at the opportunity of attracting the humongous console business over to the PC because we are going to offer the same kind of experience but with a lot more depth in the titles."

A Brave New World

Activision has allied itself with Windows 95 strongly, making a number of games that are native to the operating system. Microsoft has reciprocated by working out the details for a SideWinder 3D Pro joystick/MechWarrior II package in conjunction with Activision. However, this newfound friendship hasn't prevented Microsoft from signing Gray Matter to produce a battle-mech game as well. Scar, which is being produced internally at Microsoft by Andrew Held of MechWarrior II fame, is planned for release this fall and will take advantage of the Windows 95 architecture. It also will take advantage of what Microsoft can put behind the promo campaign.

Garcia stresses the partnership aspect of the entertainment unit. Microsoft's aim is not simply to publish the software that is being produced under the Microsoft banner but to actively work with the developer to help create the best product possible.

For Garcia and the rest of the Microsoft team, this is part of the challenge that lies ahead. He comments that this is the most exciting part of being at Microsoft—trying to discover what the consumer wants. And there's more on the way. Planned for the future are an off-road driving game from Terminal Reality, Inc., an underwater action game from Rainbow America, more potential ventures into gaming hardware by the hardware group and more. Microsoft might mean big business, but they want it known that in the next few months, Microsoft will also mean fun.



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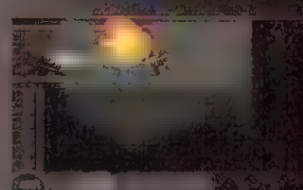
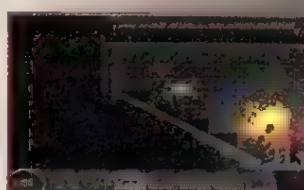
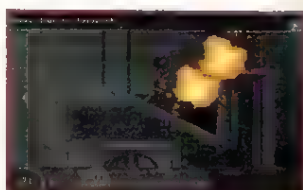
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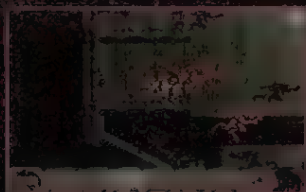


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by Steven Greenlee

INDIANA JONES MOVE OVER

Discover the World's Greatest Burial Tomb in QIN: Tomb of the Middle Kingdom

They made a movie about the last Emperor of China, but little is known about the first Emperor. Now comes the chance to learn about Qin Shi Huangdi, who by the age of 39, had brought most of China under his sole authority. Game designer Luyen Chou has taken all that is known about Qin's fantastic burial city-tomb and used it to create a game where Indiana Jones meets *Myst*. Steven Greenlee recently talked with Chou about the inspiration and the perspiration behind *Qin: The Tomb of the Middle Kingdom*.

CGR: Pretty soon, when people walk into their favorite software store, they're going to see this red box...

Luyen Chou: Right.

CGR: Luyen's Chinese, feeling a little bit like a Chinese character and getting into it going to see the letters "QIN."

LC: "Right."

CGR: And people all over are going to say...

LC: "Quinn [laughs]."

CGR: However, it's not Quinn is it?

LC: "Right. It's 'Ching.' Actually that's something we thought long and hard about, but part of it is we wanted it to lend to the mysteriousness of the game itself and so some of the earlier teasers on-line said something like, 'Q I N is coming.' When you actually open the program the first thing it will do is enunciate the word for you. Hopefully at that moment [players will say] 'Oh, Ching.' It's partly meant to be a teaser."

CGR: What is Qin?

LC: "Qin is the name of two things: the dynasty which is really considered the first real dynasty in Chinese history and the name assumed by the first real emperor of China, who is known as Qin Shi Huangdi. Qin Shi Huangdi is said to live the 3rd century B.C. and was really the equivalent of our western [Julius] Caesar and Augustus [Caesar] and Napoleon and Hitler all in one. He's probably the most important figure in Chinese history."

CGR: Some people may be familiar with the game theme, though, since some of the discoveries in the tomb have been pretty famous, like the rows and

rows of thousands of miniature soldiers.

LC: "In fact they are not miniature, they're life-sized. And as far as [archaeologists] can tell almost every face on every soldier is different. Some people even think they are modeled after his actual soldiers. What they found are several thousand of these soldiers—in fact they just found more recently in the last few months in the outlying area around the central tumulus of the site. They have not yet excavated the main site for a variety of reasons. The government usually cites a lack of funds, but conventional wisdom is that they're scared

“...this design team has [taken] inspiration from the guys who put *Myst* together and we’re really beholden to them for creating a genre...”



to go in, probably for good reasons. It's supposedly booby-trapped and also there's a lot of superstition surrounding the site. They're also probably wary that they don't have the proper technology to open it without destroying it or having someone get mortally injured as they go in. The site itself—I think it is important to know—is just huge. It's about 25 square football fields in size and no one is sure quite how deep. There's a tremendous amount of historical record about what's inside, but to this day what really lies inside that tomb [remains a mystery].”

EA: The tomb is Qin's equivalent of a pyramid, but it's all underground, isn't it?

LC: “Exactly. There is a long tradition in China, both predating and post-dating Emperor Qin of building underground

tombs. The ones that have been excavated generally range from fairly insignificant to fairly luxurious, but nothing [is] comparable to this. I mean, it really is on the order of the pyramids. Again, the conventional wisdom is that where the pyramids are very large above-ground structures to sort of denote that something of importance is there, they are substantially smaller internally. Qin's site is quite a bit larger than anything that exists in Egyptian archeology.”

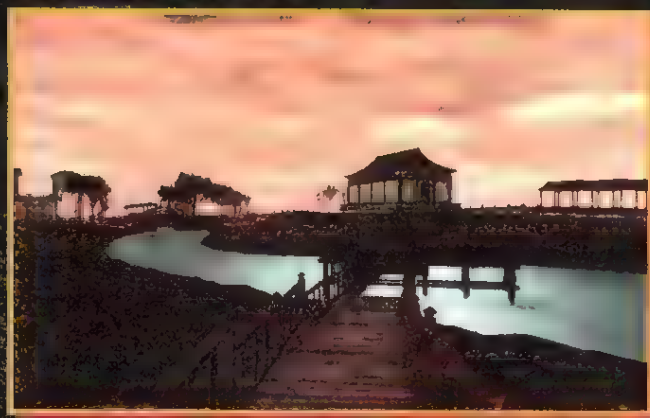
EA: In essence, in your game *Qin Tomb of the Middle Kingdoms*, we get to play amateur archeologists. That's a fascinating idea. How did you come up with it?

LC: “Well, it really dates back to 1982 when I went on a trip with my father to explore China for the first time, which is my [family's] homeland. I had never been there before. We did not visit Qin's tomb, we went to see several of the later tombs of the Ming dynasty, which are closer to the great wall near Beijing. I looked at these things and said, ‘You

CGR: And how was that? Was it a difficult topic to translate into a computer game medium?

LC: "Yes. Yes and no. I think on the one hand it's really a logical thing to do. On the other hand you obviously have to ride a fine balance between fact and fiction. I think that once people actually go into the site, it will probably be in much [worse] shape than what we've rendered in the game, but our purpose first and foremost was to deliver a good game. But we wanted to be as true to history as possible so we made sure that we did as much historical research as we could to populate the site with historically accurate renditions of things we expect to be in there. I think the biggest challenge was trying to create a balance between something that can be played in a game and on the other hand something that has some basis [in] reality. I think the second hardest issue was we wanted to render graphics and make an experience that communicated the aesthetics of Eastern Asia

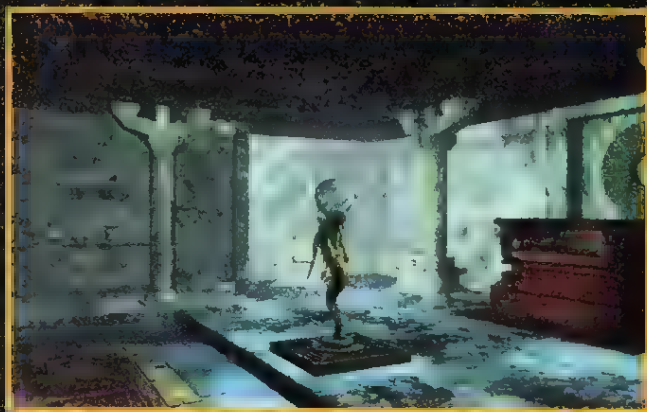
know, these are more spectacular than anything you see in [an] Indiana Jones [film]. It would be so great to be an adventurer and discover these things. Subsequent to that, my father told me about... Qin's site and about the mystery surrounding it and the fact that nobody has gone in. I think for a long time, in my mind at least, [it remained] a great site for something. I wasn't sure what. Book? Game? Something like that. About a year and a half ago when we were dreaming up projects it just all came together. It was really my father's prompting more than anything else. That was the beginning of it. It just clicked. Everything came together. We dug in and started working on it."



"You know, these are more spectacular than anything you see in [an] Indiana Jones [film]. It would be so great to be an adventurer and discover these things."

and, China in particular. I think that's something that's unusual in this medium right now for a variety of reasons. We had to approach the way we did the graphics completely differently than other games in this genre."

CGR: I've seen Myst and I know what Myst looks like, and I've seen Qin and I know what it looks like. Qin looks almost photorealistic. On the other hand, with Myst, you knew that you were on this island, but the whole thing felt like a



science-fiction setting. Qin looks real.

LC: "That's the highest compliment we can get and we struggled to do that. You know, the process by which we did that was incredibly arduous. I think that we probably anticipated that it would be easier than it in fact was. I mean, we actually...everything was modeled and rendered in 3D by a really, really top team of 3D architects out in San Francisco called View By View. Their speciality is [creat]ing 3D environments that make you feel like you're there. In addition to that, we what we did to augment...I think the problem with a lot these 3D games right now is they look very plastic. They look like they came out of Stratovision or Electric Image or often SGI, they often all have that same plastic look to them. The real challenge was [finding the] textures to wrap around the wireframes to

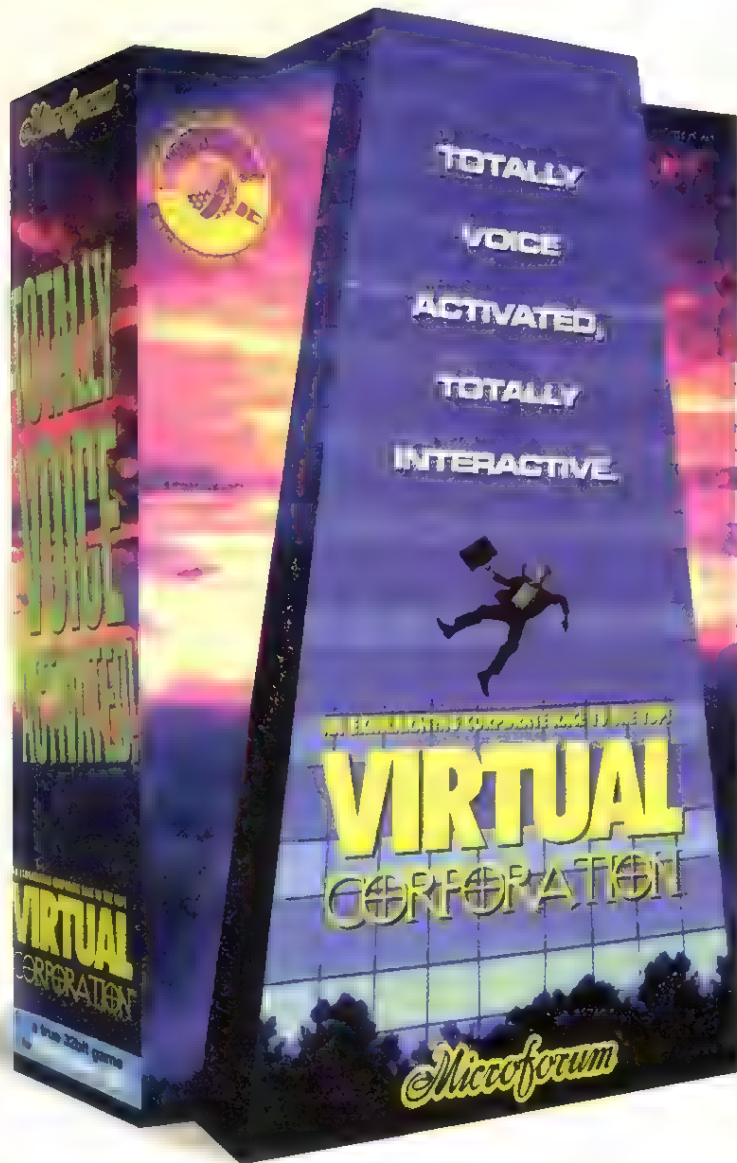
make it look really authentic and realistic. So our art director here, Abbie Doan did a lot of research into traditional fabrics and materials and actually photographed them and scanned them. Those are the textures we wrapped around these wireframes. In addition to that, after we rendered them out like that, we did a lot of work in [Adobe] Photoshop here in house on top of the 3D images to give [them] ambience and make the lighting right and rough them up a little bit to make them [look] old."

CGR: So now we have the look and the historical accuracies. Where does the game come in?

LC: "Good question. What you are playing is...I'll give you a little bit of the back story and tell you how the interface works. The world we've imagined here is about 15 years from now—we're calling it 2010. And the idea is that China is really in turmoil and you've been appointed by a American media mogul to be on a team of excavators to go and explore this site. And it turns out, in the very beginning of the game before the team is even able to get in to the site, you stumble on the entrance, you actually fall in and you can't get out and you've lost your connection with the rest of the team so you're on your own. Of course, as you go through it, without giving too much away, the question is, 'Did you fall in by accident or were you chosen by the spirits of the

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...you are not simply thrown into this world and asked to figure out some fairly obscure problems. The problems relate to real history and there are clues...

site to be their pawn in their eternal struggle over the meaning of the site.' And the other thing I'll say without giving anything away, [is that] the Emperor Qin, and this is historically true, all his life had been obsessed with immortality and was trying to find the secret to everlasting life—the elixir of immortality. His chief minister, a fictional character based on a historical character, we've named Master Lu, built the site for him and was also assigned to try and find the elixir. It's safe to say finding the elixir figures [as] prominently in the story of the game as just trying to get out of the site itself. You'll have to manipulate many of the objects in the site in order to accomplish your goals. One area that I think is significantly different from the other games in the genre is that built into the game are several tools to help you. One is an overhead map that you can use to zoom around to places you've already been. Another is a character interpreter. All the clues and all the materials left behind by the people who created the site are [written] in Chinese and there's an on-board interpreter that will [translate] clues from Chinese into English. So there is an interaction with this game which is different from other, similar games in this genre in that you are not simply thrown into this world and asked to figure out some fairly obscure problems. The problems relate to real history and there are clues in the encyclopedia."

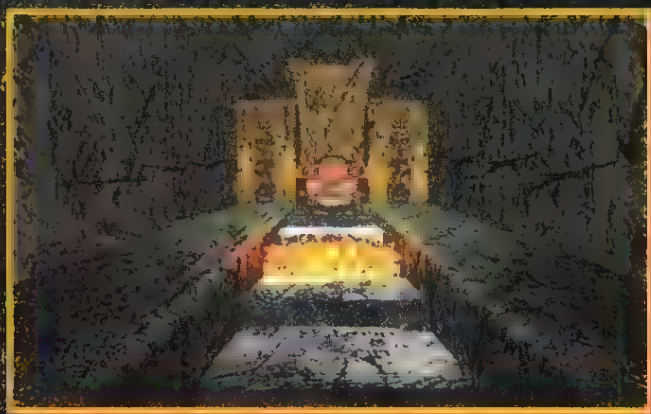
CGR: So what we might get is a puzzle where, to move through a passage, for instance, we'll need to read the Chinese char-

acters on the wall, then use the interpreter to understand what they mean, and then use the encyclopedia to figure out what to do.

LC: "Right."

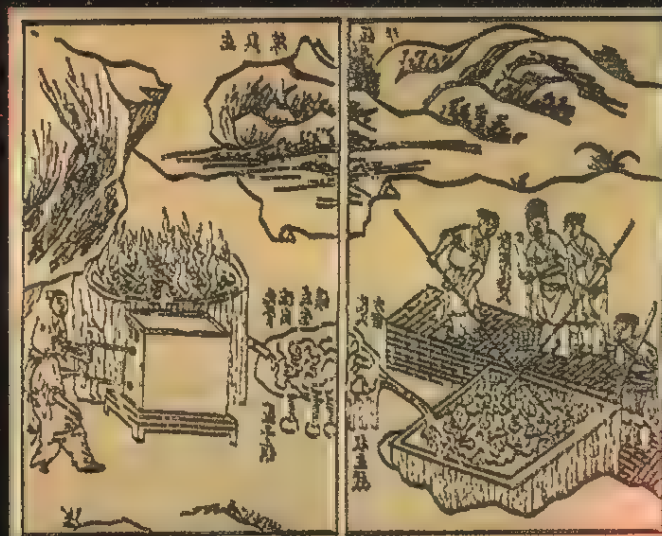
CGR: But is there a dash of Indiana Jones in Qin?

LC: "Absolutely. We very much wanted to have that too. On the one hand, like *Myst*, there are no fatal mistakes you can make just short of never being able to make it out. However, there are all sorts of things, traps and whatever, that are designed to prevent your moving forward or to impede your progress. They range from giant stone balls that roll into your path to doors that



slam shut in your face [and] that can only be opened through some kind of magic and technology. So there's very much Indiana Jones in it and I think that people who enjoy the adventure genre in the world of some else's creation will really enjoy this, because you feel gratified as you outsmart the creators of the site and progress through it."

CGR: The other thing I'd like to mention is your



father. Not only did he take you to China and sow the seeds that produced Qin: The Tomb of the Middle Kingdom, but he is a musician and composer. In fact, he composed the soundtrack for Qin, right?

LC: "Right. He actually...my father is a composer. He actually didn't compose it himself, [but] two of his students [did]. They are [a] husband

CGR: While this obviously owes something to *Myst*, it also stands on its own merits.

LC: "I'm glad you said [that] and we hope it's really true. I should say that this design team has [taken] inspiration from the guys who put *Myst* together and we're really beholden to them for creating a genre or at least articulating a genre that's been around for some time. But we really wanted to go beyond that experience. This is a multisensory experience. It's multimedia in its truest sense and we want the music and the sound effects to be as much a part of the game experience as the visuals are and the history is. In fact we recommend [using] headphones, because the sound effects are stereo and often the sound effects provide clues as to what's going on in the site. When you turn [your] head [from] one direction to another, if there's running water you'll [discover] the direction it's coming from. Often, the game will give you an audio clue to help solve a puzzle and so on. We have a couple of terrific sound designers working on making the soundscape as rich as you can imagine. I think for this genre it's the most sophisticated soundscape that we've experienced. Again, we've put a lot of thought and time in to making that work."

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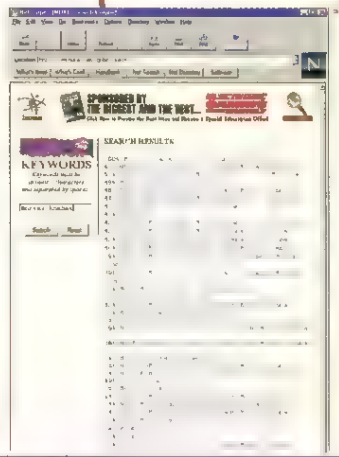
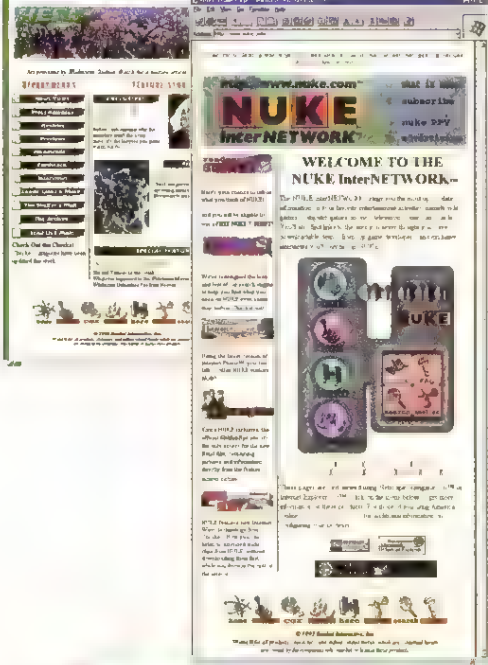
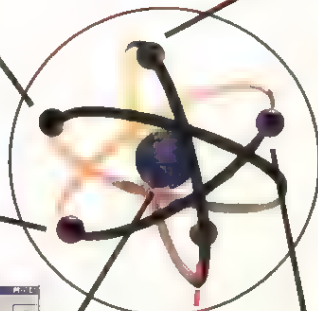
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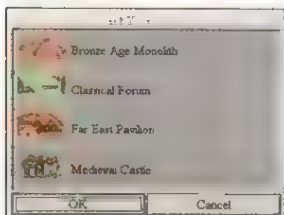
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PREVIEWS

Civilization II

Without question, one of the most influential games in the history of computer entertainment is Sid Meier's Civilization. This game helped create an entire new genre of games—that of empire building and management. And while Meier's most recent effort in the genre, Colonization, may have placated some fans, nothing can really hold a candle to the original. Until now, with the advent of Civilization II

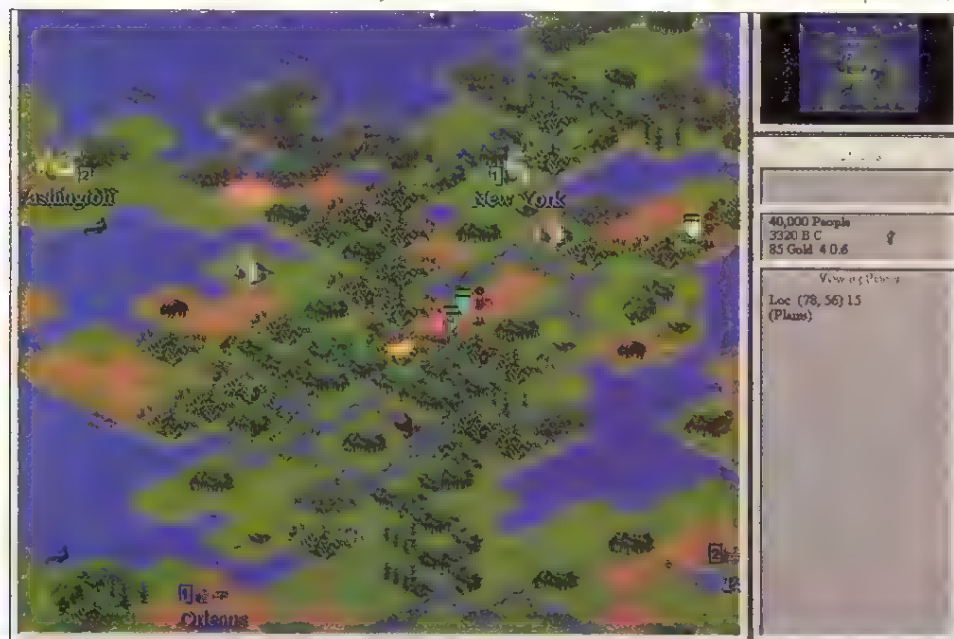


Civilization II retains the features from the original Civilization and improves on them in many ways. There are now more civilizations to choose from, more units to build, more Wonders of the World to impress other civiliza-



tions with and greater technology to create and smash the enemy with. For the true Civilization expert, a sixth level of difficulty has been added—the divinity level—to satisfy those gamers who found the AI in the hardest level of the original too easy to beat.

Among the new wonders are Sun Tzu's War Academy and Marco Polo's Embassy. New troop types include elephants, paratroopers, spies, crusaders and helicopters. A new map editor and preset scenarios like World War II and Alexander the Great provide addi-



Civilization II keeps all of the best features from the original game and adds new, exciting options. One of the biggest improvements is in the overall look of the map.

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gearheads
a furious war of wind-up toys

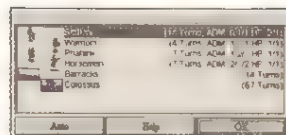
In the war of the Gearheads, the guy's M.O. is dead simple: Scare the other toys silly.

Hey, no problem. One guy's got that fiendish skull, blaring, bloodshot eyes, cracked cranium and chattering jaw and what would you do introduce him to your sister?



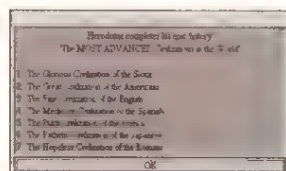
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tional levels of challenge for the skilled Civilization player

An improved diplomacy system allows players to negotiate a number of peace settlements including alliances, setting territorial boundaries and negotiating cease-fire agreements. And for when those peace talks fall apart, the combat system has been overhauled to include variables like fire power levels, port facilities and airports.



REQUIREMENTS

486 or better 4MB RAM
SVGA 2xCD-ROM

AVAILABLE FOR: PC and compatibles

DESIGNED BY: MicroProse

DISTRIBUTED BY: Spectrum HoloByte

STREET PRICE: N/A

RELEASE DATE: Second Quarter, '96

EXPERIENCE 3D AI

DEMO: <http://www.goldtree.com/>



CYLINDRIX

PURCHASE – **1-800-746-3772** – GET DEMO
INFORMATION : GOLDTREE1@AOL.COM

GOLDTREE
SOFTWARE

Min. Req: 486/66DX, MSDOS ver5+, CD ROM, 100% Soundblaster Compatible, 8 Megs RAM.



PREVIEWS

Deadlock

When the number of habitable planets becomes scarce, there's only one logical decision that can be made by the races competing for a new planet. This was decided the last time a couple of races fought over a pristine planet and turned it into a hunk of uninhabitable space glop. The rational way to decide who gets to colonize is to have all of the races in question send down a team of colonists armed with little technology and fewer resources. The first group to create massive cities in five territories wins, and the other races have to leave the world.



Play as one of seven different races.

You can try one of several different tactics to win. Great technology may be able to make up for a lack of manpower, which could enable you to sneak into victory. On the other hand, if you manage to wipe your opponents out, they can't prevent you from taking over the planet anyway. If you get really desperate, you can try to contact

someone offworld, but be warned: doing so is against the terms of the competition. If you get caught "cheating" like this, the other races may take serious action against you. Of course, if you don't get caught doing something, no one needs to know you did it.

Deadlock offers players a number of different planet styles to conquer. While the computer intelligence will provide a good challenge for most players, the option of playing other humans via network or modem is what really makes Deadlock exciting.

Diplomacy options allow you to create deals with other players and align against a race that is on the verge of winning control of the planet.

Experienced strategy gamers will be able to jump right in and start playing. For the less experienced player, a complete on-line tutorial will guide you through the ins and outs of researching, creating new units and conducting battles. Only through wise allocation of resources and skillful diplomacy and military tactics can you break the deadlock and claim victory.



Establish your presence in various territories to ensure victory. In addition to expanding to new areas, you'll need to create adequate protection from enemy intruders.

ZAPBOT: HE'S A REAL LIVE WIRE.



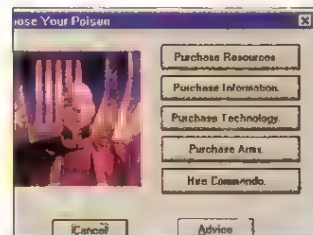
gearheads

a furious war of wind up toys



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REQUIREMENTS

486/66 or better, 8MB RAM
SVGA, 2xCD-ROM

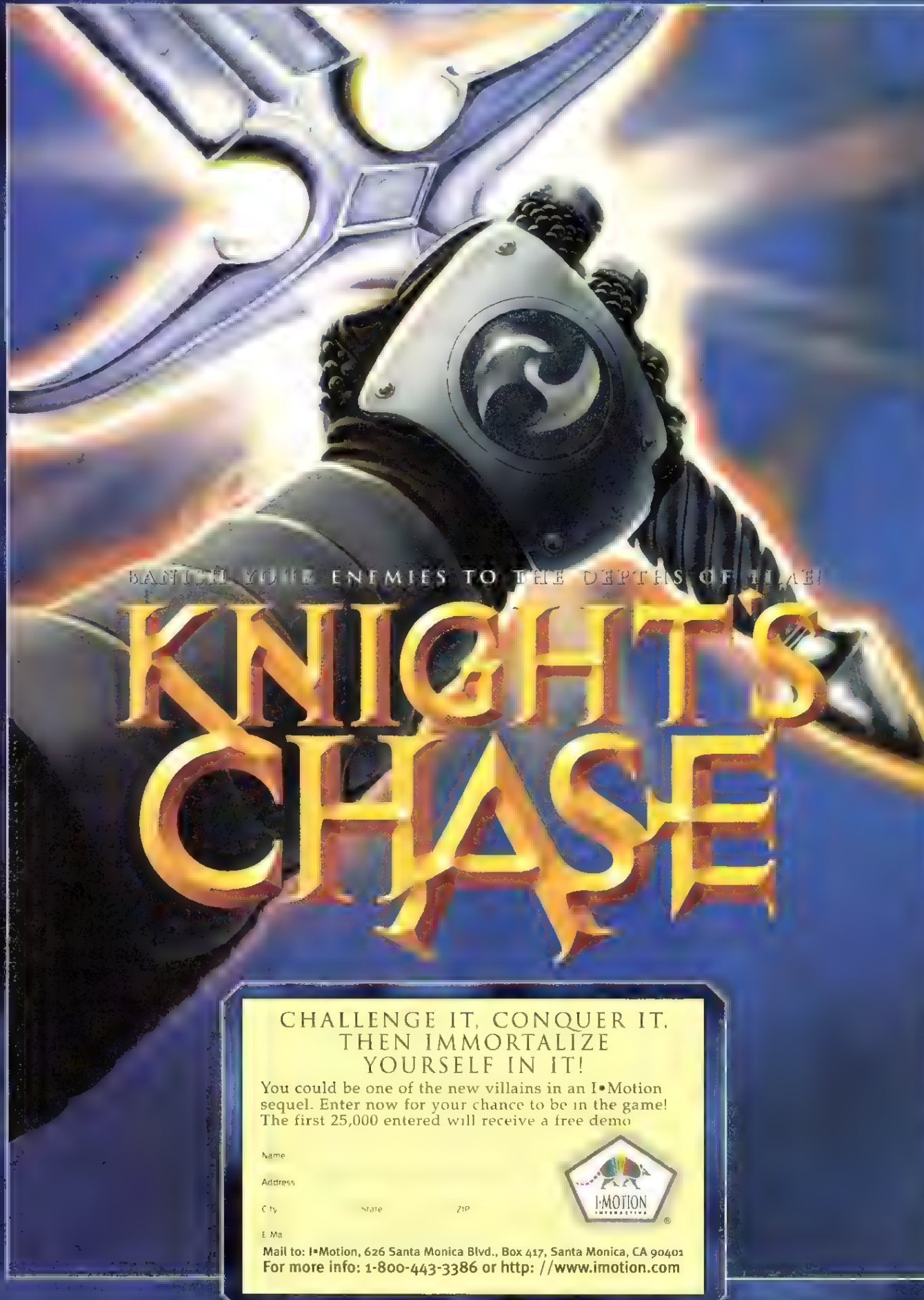
AVAILABLE FOR PC and compatibles

DESIGNED BY Accolade

DISTRIBUTED BY Accolade

STREET PRICE: N/A

RELEASE DATE: Second Quarter, '96



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PREVIEWS

Star Control III

The universe is a big place, potentially filled with all sorts of creatures. You've already encountered a number of them in your adventures across the galaxy in the first two Star Control games. The third incarnation of the Star Control universe will hold a number of new races with new abilities, new foibles and, most importantly, new ship types.

Among these new races are the Claircontlar, the X Chagger, the Ploxis, the Herald, the L K and the Owa. Returning from Star Control II are the Mycon, the Vux, the Utwig, the Syreen, the Spathi, the Orz, the Pkunk and the Ariou, among others. Not all of the races have made it to the third game though. The Thraddash, the Mmrn-Mhrn and the Druuge are not here, and the fates of the Yeehat and the Zokfotpk are unknown at this time (it is likely that they will not appear in Star Control III). Of course, the Ur-Quan and the Kohr-Ah are back



All of the aliens have been created by top Hollywood talent to appear as realistic as possible. These aliens aren't computer graphics—they are animatronic models created to give the game a high-tech look.

As with past incarnations of Star Control, you'll be



Out in space, an armada gets ready to take the battle to an enemy fleet. Note the wide variety of ship types.

DISASTEROID: Loves to kick asteroid.



When ever gearheads battle, Disasteroid a way faster not so, if you need people to make notes in your opponent's defenses, Disasteroid's the guy.



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able to participate in a Hyper Melee against a computer opponent or a human player. Unlike Star Control games in the past, though, you can now play the Hyper Melee via network or modem connection.

Virtually every aspect of the game has been improved upon: improved combat controls and player interface makes game play even more addictive, and the story has been created by adventure game powerhouse Legend Entertainment. A gigantic universe

is there for the exploration. Once again, it is up to you to defeat the Ur-Quan.

REQUIREMENTS

486/66 or better, 8MB RAM
SVGA, 2xCD-ROM

AVAILABLE FOR: PC and compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Legend Entertainment

DISTRIBUTED BY: Accolade

STREET PRICE: N/A

RELEASE DATE: Second Quarter, '96



The hyper-melee includes ship types both old and new. As with past Star Control games, each ship has its vulnerable spots.

PREVIEWS

Diablo

While the fantasy role-playing genre has been ignored by a lot of companies lately, the people at Blizzard have decided to try something different. The result of their efforts is Diablo, an action-oriented role-playing game that uses a more traditional isometric view instead of the first-person look that has become increasingly common.

So what, besides the perspective makes Diablo so different? For starters, the basic idea that went into creating the game was to make it more available to a variety of gamers and gaming styles. To help do this, Diablo has been made multiplayer. You can go into the dungeons by yourself, but for a more interesting experience, as well as one that better duplicates the feel of playing a pen-and-paper RPG, you can hook up with friends via modem or over a network.

Naturally, the idea is for you and your friends to help each other out of some tough spots in the dungeons, but it is possible for fights to break out as well. An item of power may cause dissension in the group regardless of who takes control over it. This is reflected in the final game—if someone in your party isn't playing nice, you can attack or restrain him or her or cast spells until he or she sees your point of view. In other words, your characters are capable of acting like real people. And even if the in-fighting gets truly vicious, players will need to co-operate to solve some puzzles in multiplayer dungeons that will require the assistance or action of more than one character.

Additionally, every time a player sits down with Diablo, it's a different gaming experience. Rather than have a pregenerated adventure, the game creates a random dungeon every time the player asks for a new game. Even when you have finished an adventure, you can go back to the start and play through the game again, having an entirely new experience. The level generator randomly places rooms, corridors, monsters, traps and treasure in a way that maximizes the space on a level.

Players can opt for three different character types—fighter, archer or wizard. Each one has particular strengths and weaknesses. However, unlike most games of this nature, no character is banned from using a particular item or spell. While a fighter will be better with weapons and worse with magic, he'll still be able to cast spells and work magic items. Likewise, a wizard will generally do better with the spells and various magic found in the dungeon, but if he finds a sword and wants to use it, he won't be prevented from doing so.

Additionally, the real-time engine allows the player to have an exciting experience and to feel as if he or she is truly a part of the action. SVGA enhanced graphics and a fully rendered 3D environment offer a visually rich place to explore without making it difficult to see what is going on. Light sourcing allows the player to see only those parts of the dungeon that he or she would be able to see while an automap allows the player to check out



On the left, you, the good guy. On the right, the horrible snake demon. In a head-to-head battle, only one of you can survive. Fortunately for you, you've got an advantage.

where he or she has already traveled. Characters can take a break from exploring by leaving the dungeon and exploring the town that lies above it. Additionally, items found in the dungeon can be brought here for sale or trade, allowing the character or party to continually equip itself for the dungeon below.

Look for Diablo to appear sometime in the second quarter of 1996 with a suggested retail price of around \$50.

REQUIREMENTS

486/66, 8MB RAM, SVGA, 2xCD-ROM

AVAILABLE FOR: PC and Compatibles

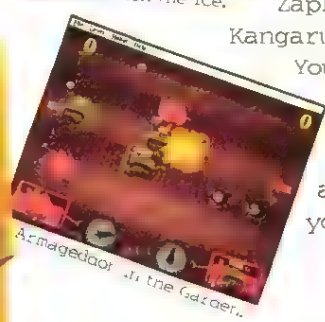
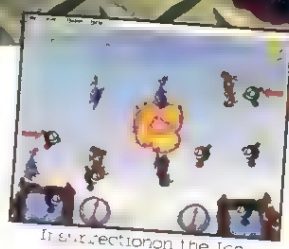
DESIGNED BY: Blizzard Entertainment

DISTRIBUTED BY: Davidson and Associates

STREET PRICE: \$40-50

RELEASE DATE: 2nd Quarter, '96

gearheads: War is fun.



Welcome to the Battle of the Century. Gearheads: A fast-paced, wacked-out, wind-up toybox full of fun. Say hello to Disasteroid, Zapbot, Deadhead, Kangaruffian and company. You'll pick a team for speed, power and maneuverability. Then launch them against an opponent or your computer.

You'll tackle a variety of different environments, each with increasing levels of difficulty. You'd better have a strategy and think fast. 'Cause the one who ends up with the most toys wins.

Gearheads. For grownups who still like to fight over toys. For Windows and Mac CD-ROM.

gearheads

a furious war of wind-up toys



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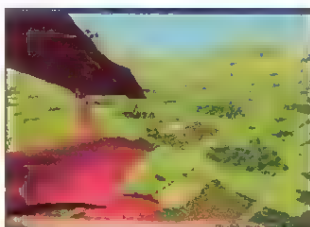
PREVIEWS

Red Baron, while years old, is still one of the best WWI flying games ever created. Now, Sierra has taken the concept of biplane dogfighting back to the drawing board for Red Baron II, a sequel that will keep the seat-of-the-pants feel of the original game while adding a number of features and improvements.

Naturally, the most evident improvement will be in the graphics. But the improvements don't stop there. For instance, you will now be able to fly against another human opponent over a network. In

Red Baron II

campaign mode, you can plan out your next mission instead of just being handed orders. And when it comes to those missions, you'll have more than a dozen different mission types to fly and 35 different planes to fly them in.



REQUIREMENTS

486/66 or better 8MB RAM, Windows 95, 2xCD-ROM, SVGA

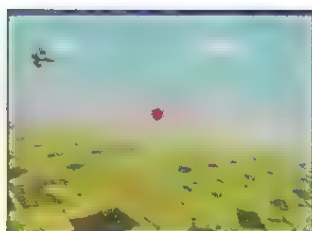
AVAILABLE FOR: PC and Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Dynamic

DISTRIBUTED BY: Sierra Online

STREET PRICE: N/A

RELEASE DATE: 2nd Quarter '96



He's in your sights—now just pull the trigger and get on to your next victim...er, target.



Enjoy the lush scenery as you get some advice from your spiritual advisor, located at the bottom right.

Welcome to the Future

On a mystic landscape, you receive a quest. Your goal is to discover artifacts and symbols that hold the key to the future. Your trek will take you over mountains and deep below the surface of the land. Your ultimate goal is to find six different golden symbols. Once they have been located, you will be able to set off on your final quest of discovering the secrets of the future.

Welcome to the Future is a game in the tradition of Myst. High-resolution 3D graphics and detailed artwork make even walking along the various landscapes a pleasure. WTTF also includes over 25,000 frames of full-motion raytraced 3D

images. Additionally, the game contains a number of original musical compositions that further complement the game.

Seek the knowledge that only the future can offer, traveler, for once you have discovered it, you will not wish to turn back.



REQUIREMENTS

486 or better, Windows 3.1 or better 8MB RAM, 2xCD-ROM

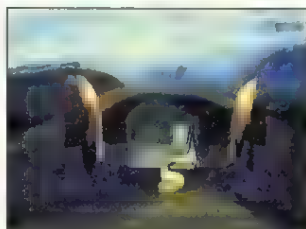
AVAILABLE FOR: PC and Compatibles

DESIGNED BY: Blue Sky

DISTRIBUTED BY: Blue Sky Entertainment

STREET PRICE: \$50

RELEASE DATE: Now

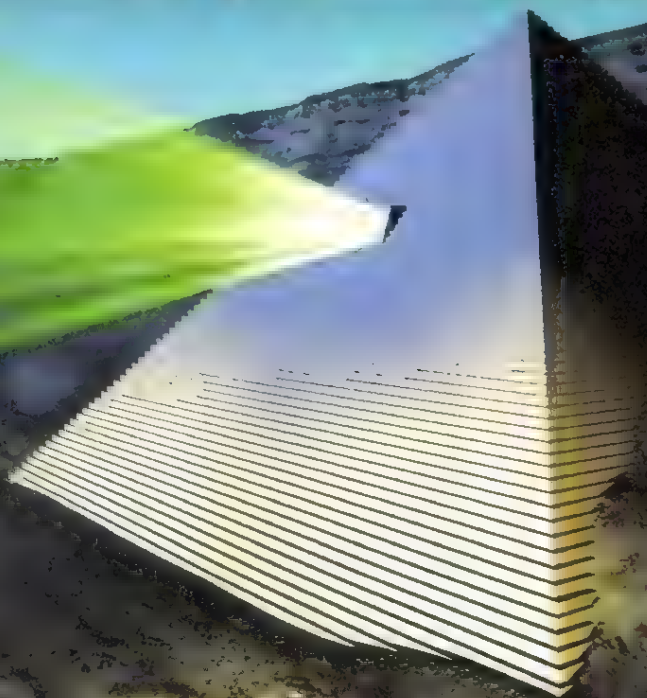


Advertisers Index

7th Level	61	Gamers Gold	143	Ocean	91
Access	100,101	Goldtree Enterprises	126	Origin	116,117
Activision	IFC, 3,50,51,55	GT Interactive	104	Philips	15,45,125,127,129,131
Atari	57	I-Motion	128	Pulse Entertainment	43
Blizzard	4,5	Interact Accessories	IBC	Sirius Publishing	6,7
Capstone	41,135	Interactive Magic	75	Sony Interactive	47,115
Chips and Bits	63,70,71	Interplay	13,27,79,82,83	Spectrum HoloByte	97
Columbia House	19	JVC	102,109	SSI	17,53
Creative Labs	123	LucasArts	10,11,99	Take 2 Interactive	29-31
Domark	OBC	Microforum	121,141	U.S. Gold	113
Earthlink	22	Maxis	33,67	Vic Tokai	133
Falcon Northwest	89	Mindscape	65,86,87	Virgin	39,103,105
FormGen	23,73,139	New World Computing	92,93,95		

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SECRETS OF THE
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DYNASTY



A huge mining corporation has unearthed something unexpected. All they would tell you yesterday was that it dated back to 11,000 B.C. Now, you see it, an ancient Egyptian pyramid that seems to reach out to the desert sky like a beacon. Secrets of the Lost Dynasty presents a vivid 3-D environment with smooth and realistic movement in which you will explore a complex and ancient architecture.

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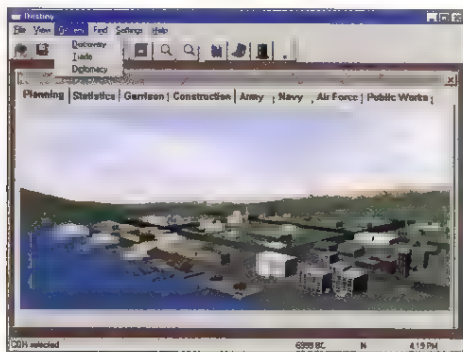
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PREVIEWS

When it comes to conquest, some people just can't get enough. If you are the type who loves nothing more than crushing your enemies into the ground, you'll want to



take a look at Destiny from Interactive Magic. In the tradition of Civilization, Destiny improves the overall look and feel of planetary conquest games without taking anything away from the visceral thrill of destroying the bad guys.

So what makes Destiny better? For starters, gamers who like the feel of realtime action can opt for a realtime sim. However, if you like the slower pace of taking turns, Destiny is playable as a turn-based game as well. Multiple scenarios offer a greater challenge. If you have a lot of experience as a computer general, you can also take over the

Destiny

battlefield functions any time there is a military situation. If you are badly outnumbered, you might still be able to pull out a victory, or at least inflict a lot of damage in losing. Or, if you don't want to concentrate on the military, opt for a

scientific game where research plays a much more important role in determining the final winner.

Take on computer opponents or see which of your friends can give you the best game by playing a multi-player game. Fulfill your Destiny!

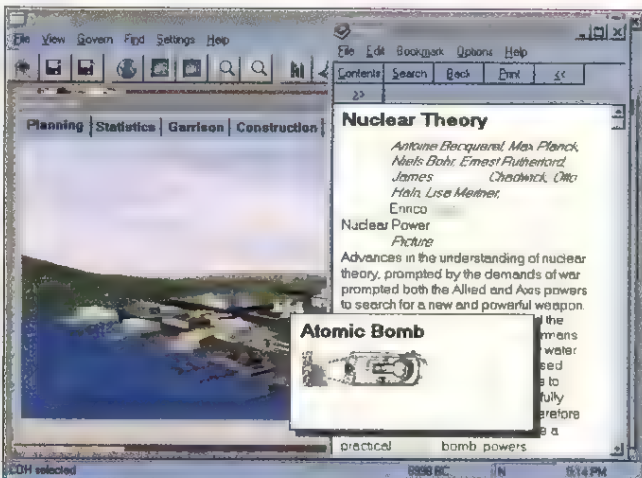


Death, destruction and carnage make your coffee taste better in Destiny.

REQUIREMENTS

486/66 or better, 8MB RAM, SVGA, Windows 95

AVAILABLE FOR: PC and Compatibles
DESIGNED BY: Interactive Magic
DISTRIBUTED BY: Interactive Magic
STREET PRICE: N/A
RELEASE DATE: 2nd Quarter 1996



Research will help you gain a technological edge over your opponents, although in some cases it could just lead to an arms build up.



The pressure is on. Time is winding down. Make the shot and go to the next round. Miss, and watch the next game from your couch.

NCAA Championship Basketball

People can talk about the excitement surrounding the Super Bowl or the World Series, but the most exciting time in all of sports is March Madness. The NCAA college basketball tournament offers viewers 63 basketball games in a couple of short weeks, with the first couple of days of the tournament being the wildest. Nothing can match that excitement, although a few computer games have tried. The latest to try to accurately simulate the thrill of playing for a national championship is GTE with NCAA Championship Basketball.

This is the real deal. While the players' names have been changed (due to their amateur status), the teams are all here as are the logos. But that's simply the icing on the cake. The real meat of the game is in the accuracy of the simulation. NCAA offers realistic five-on-five basketball action complete with all of the thrills and craziness that college basketball inspires. When you are shooting two free throws with no time left on the clock, expect the crowd behind the basket to be doing its best to

keep you from concentrating. Do a massive monster dunk and the crowd will erupt with cheers. This is as close as you can get to college hoops without putting on the uniform yourself.

It'll be a challenge, too. The artificial intelligence is designed to give you a good game. It will also improve as you play. The players mature and get smarter as they go from year to year, so that trick that worked against that Penn State guard when he was a freshman won't do anything for you three seasons later.



Kansas takes on UMass in what could well be a Final Four preview...

NCAA Championship Basketball contains more than 4,500 frames of animation, a continuously moving on-court camera perspective and modern-to-modern play for the ultimate basketball experience.

REQUIREMENTS

486/66 or better, 8MB RAM, SVGA, 2xCD-ROM

AVAILABLE FOR: PC and Compatibles
DESIGNED BY: GTE Interactive
DISTRIBUTED BY: GTE Interactive
STREET PRICE: N/A
RELEASE DATE: March, 1996



THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR VICTORY!

The V for Victory Series has set a new standard for computer wargames. Now available as a complete set on a single CD-ROM, it is the most popular and realistic simulation of large-scale WWII ground combat ever produced. Remarkably easy to learn and play, historically accurate and extremely sophisticated in wargame modeling techniques.

Choose to command the American forces at **UTAH BEACH**, Normandy, 1944 or the British front at **GOLD•JUNO•SWORD**. Play both sides of the battles. Counterattack with German Panzer Divisions against the heralded 101st Airborne Division. Lead a British contingent at **MARKET GARDEN**, Holland, as you try to capture the bridges across the Rhine. Join the Russian front at **VELIKIYE LUKI** to secure strategic railroad routes from the Nazis.

- Plan your own air-land-sea battles
- Easy to use boardgame-like interface
- Computerized staff assistant
- Limited Intelligence option simulates the "fog of war"

END OF WORLD WAR II
1945-1995

FOR VICTORY

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V for Victory boasts an incredible list of awards including multiple Wargame of the Year and Best Strategy Game of the Year awards from a host of published reviews by gaming experts.

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MAC CD-ROM

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IBM CD-ROM

STRATEGY

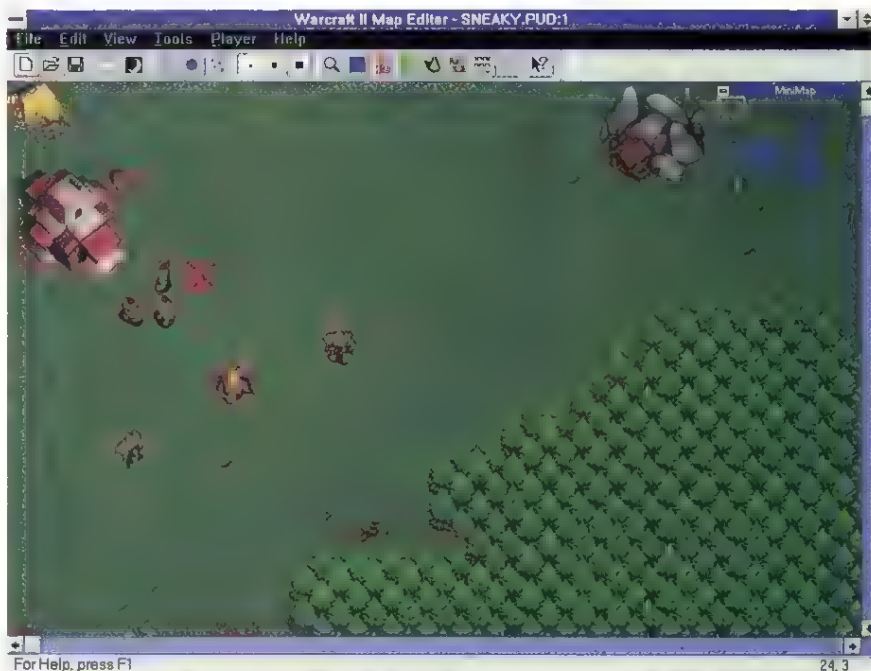
Fight with Honor

How to build a winning Warcraft II scenario

Anybody can play Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness, but it takes real creativity to create a challenging scenario. Rather than walk you through one of the myriad missions of the game, we at CGR thought it might be better to give you some tips for creating your own brand of wargaming success. Because the Warcraft II scenario editor is so functional, easy to use and timely (not to mention simply that it's there), it gives us the perfect opportunity to show our readers the method behind the madness of creating a scenario that you will not only be proud of, but that you'll want to play, as well. You can download the scenarios we'll be creating for this piece from our Web site (<http://www.nuke.com>), as well as any further scenarios we create (which should be numerous).

Tip 1: Design for Yourself

This aspect of design is often overlooked. Even if you're a novice Warcraft II player, your scenarios will be much more wisely designed if you plan for your ability level. If you have trouble getting through the lower levels of Warcraft II, consider yourself a novice. Don't worry, there are other novices in the world besides yourself; your objective is to design a level that you not only can barely beat, but can have fun playing, too. That's an important factor; fun is what drives the gamer to compete, and if a scenario is too hard to beat, it's no fun. If you want to have fun playing a game of pick-up one-on-one basketball, it's not necessary (nor even fun) to compete against Michael Jordan. Ask any 1992 Olympic basketball player



Giving the Orcs two villages can mean a surprise attack on the unwary human who doesn't want to waste time exploring your level.

exactly how much fun it was playing against the Dream Team. Remember: design for your ability level, and your levels will turn out much better.

Tip 2: Balance the Equation

This is perhaps the most salient aspect of creation. You want to make each scenario tough to win and not a cakewalk. In other words, if you've set your forces up with a gold mine that has 30,000 gold, your opponent should have one with at least that much. If you don't give your opponent parity of

resources, then you should start him off with a force that is greater than yours, equal to the number of forces he'd be able to build if he had the same resources as you. This tactic, incidentally, makes a scenario a lot harder to win, since the computer will begin attacking you almost immediately.

Tip 3: Make Use of Terrain

The terrain you'll use will be the type you like best (duh!). Designing it can be tough, though, simply because there are many facets to this level of

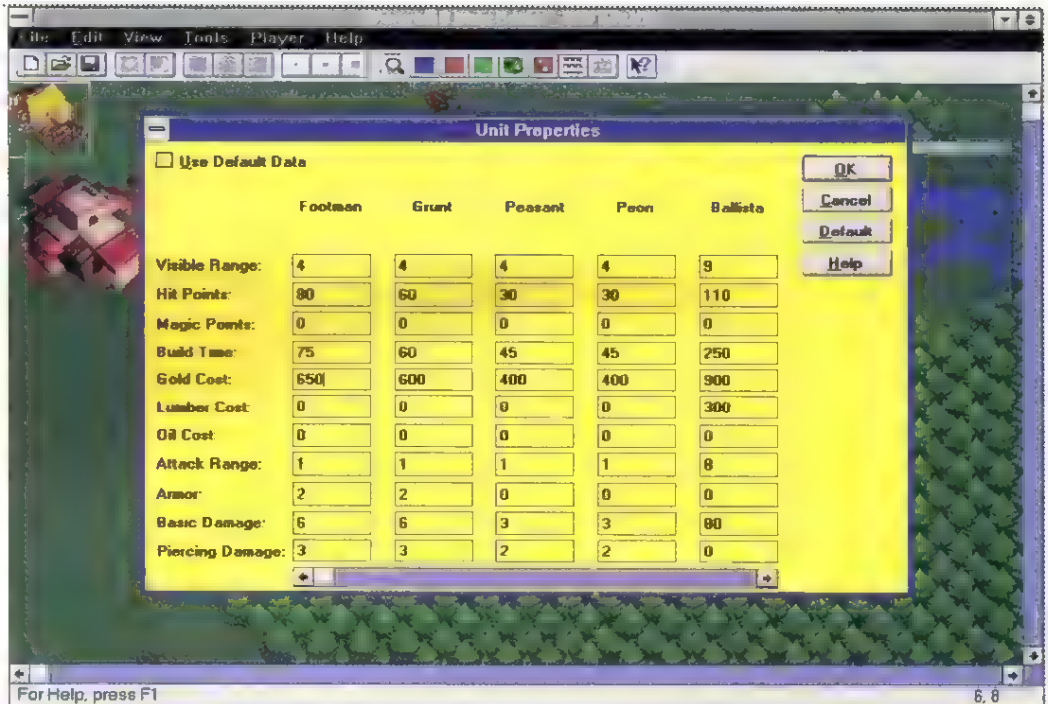
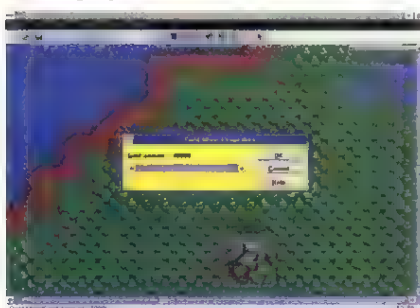
the design. The various terrain brushes are all well and fine, but in order to make the finished level look professional, you need to pay attention to the detail. Smooth out the flat and jagged edges around forests and water; otherwise, you'll wind up with terrain that looks as though it was generated by a child. Long expanses of perfectly straight beachfront don't exist in nature, so they shouldn't exist in your design, either. Try to punctuate coastline with bays and harbors. Likewise, put some clearings in your forests.

Your terrain should also try to deceive. Make paths through your forests that don't go anywhere. Put a long inlet through an expanse of land that leads to a blind harbor, distant from the action. In other words, try to get the player to explore your world, and make him pay for any assumptions he might make.

There's also the "silver lining" factor to consider. If you throw in a bunch of deceptive paths, plan to include at least one path that actually benefits the player. In forests, block off an overgrown path that leads to additional gold. On water, make a circuitous route that leads to an oil patch. The best thing about these types of Easter eggs is that, if the player wants to collect these resources, he'll have to pay for them: either he'll need to build a new Town Hall or Oil Refinery near to the new resource, or he'll have to spend precious time and manpower hauling these resources back to his existing facilities. It's a perfect win-win situation: the player will feel good about finding the new resource, but he'll have to decide whether it is worth exploiting. Try to make it worth his time, but barely so.

Tip 4: On Your Mark...

Setting up intelligent starting conditions is an excellent method of ensuring that a player has the time to build his



Brains vs. brawn: If you're going to go mucking about with unit strengths, make sure that the balance doesn't swing too heavily in one player's favor.

forces to a point where he is able to adequately defend himself. If you have set up your map for sea warfare (i.e., you have an expanse of water separating the player from the computer), you may want to limit the amount of oil each side has. This helps to prevent either side from building a ship too quickly. On the other hand, if you want sudden war on an epic scale, feel free to jack up the amounts of starting resources accordingly. You can have a merry little

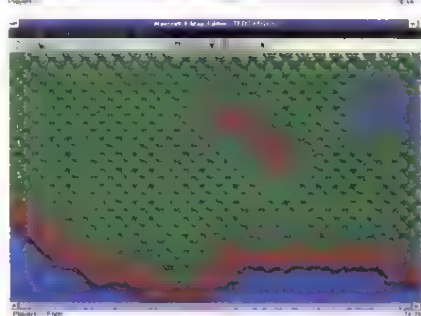
war going in almost no time using this strategy. Of course, most players will not want to play your scenario a second

By balancing the equation, your level will be much more effective and fun to play.

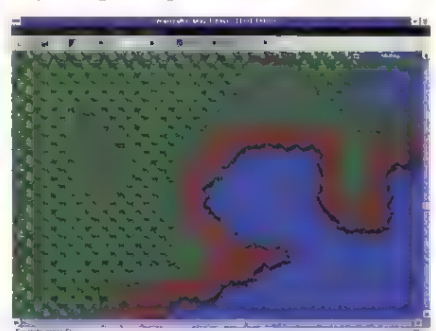
time if you do this, but you're designing only to please yourself.

Tip 5: Brains Vs. Brawn

The folks at Blizzard have done a great job ensuring that there is parity between Orcish and Human forces. Advanced users, though, may feel a bit cramped by the unit strength defaults (if you're designing your very first level, you should probably skip this bit). By adjusting the operations and costs



Using terrain (clockwise from left): Is the gold worth hacking down the trees?; bad terrain design; smoothing the rough edges; and a road to nowhere.



STRATEGY

involved in producing and maintaining units, you can start to have some real fun. However, this sort of strategic planning comes at a cost: time. You will need to consider all aspects of changing each value on the unit properties spreadsheet, and this can take a tremendous amount of time, depending on how extensively you wish to change the data.

A few words to the wise are in order here. If you plan to greatly increase a unit's basic effectiveness statistics (hit points, damage, visual acuity, etc.), you should plan on greatly increasing that unit's cost and time to build, as well. The same principle applies for decreasing a unit's effectiveness; that unit's cost should drop correspondingly. A cakewalk by any other name still smells as bad. By balancing the equation, your level will be much more effective and fun to play. I've found that most gamers appreciate this type of attention to detail; it makes new levels a real learning experience, rather than a standard run and gun.

Tip 6: A Man's Home...

If you are designing a combat scenario (as opposed to a rescue scenario, which I'll cover later), you need to have at least a simple village infrastructure in place for each side. The most basic village should have at least one farm, a town hall and a peasant. Although you can start a player with less, you'll need to ensure that he starts with enough resources to build these two items, as well as a peasant to construct them. If you're starting a player with less than these basics, you're being needlessly cruel.

Tip 7: Help Me!

Rescue missions need to be planned a little differently. You'll still need to strike a balance between opposing

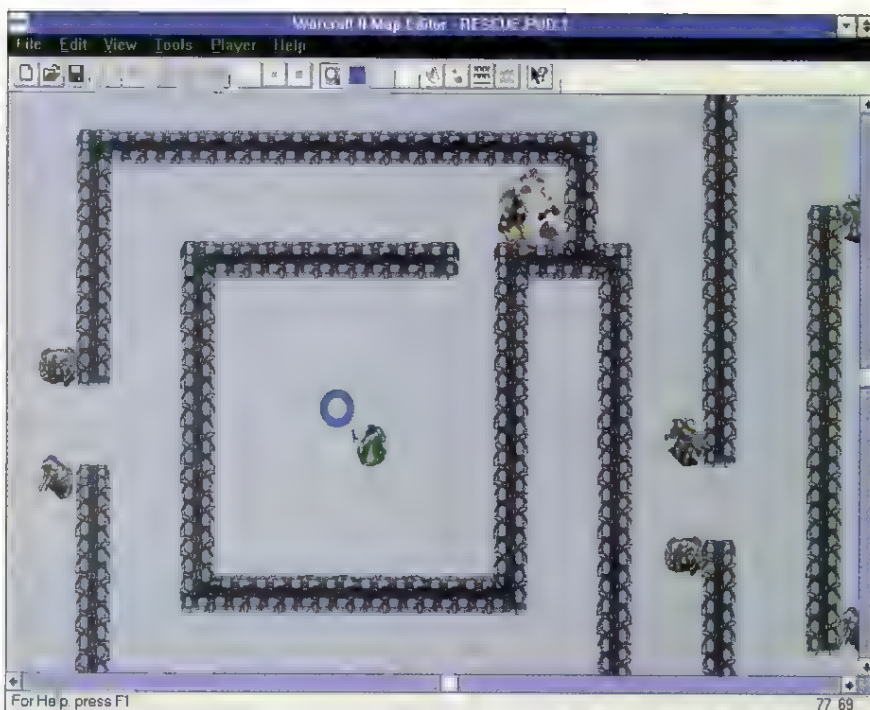


There are plenty of resources near this human village...



By giving neither player any oil, no interaction can take place for some time.

forces, but the terrain should be mapped so that the party of rescuers must wind their way through a maze. You can construct this maze using whatever materials you see fit: walls,



Balancing a rescue mission: the mage in the center and the cannon tower at top right both have had their range of sight impaired. Rescuing the mage means keeping out of sight of the tower.

trees and even water can make for some forbidding mazes. The passage should be at least lightly guarded by the enemy, preferably at strategic points that you should be able to recognize and develop. Bends in the maze make excellent lookout points. Guard towers should be used with care; having your force wiped out by an impassible guard tower is no fun for anybody.

Forces on a rescue mission should include some ranged attackers, like archers or even a mage. Never include only ranged attackers, though, as you will need some forces skilled in hand-to-hand combat. Air power should never be used on the proponent's side, as this tips that balance too far in your favor. Oh, and one other thing: remember to include a rescue mission return point.

Otherwise you can't finish off the rescue mission.

Tip 8: True Lies

If you've found that others can beat your scenario with one serial port tied behind their CPU, try deception. It can be a lot of fun to put the computer in two different places on the map. Give him two Great Halls that are distant from each other (remember that balance is in the eye of the beholder) and peasants and troops to man both villages. When the player comes across what he believes is the only Orcish village on the map, he's likely to spend most of his time keeping an eye on that particular threat. Meanwhile, the other village

will be quietly building up its forces and can unleash them with much surprise and mayhem. Pity the player who doesn't go exploring all the facets of this particular level.

- Ted Chapman



...and plenty to help balance the equation for the other side.



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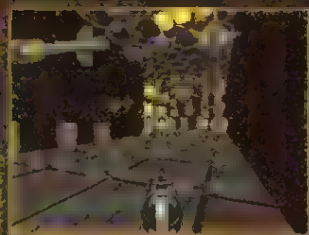
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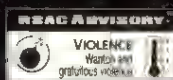


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STRATEGY

Turn and Burn!

Tear up the ECO with these Zone Raiders hints.

When the crap hits the

fan, don't even bother dialing 9-1-1. Zone Raiders is set in a post-apocalyptic world where the cities have been contaminated by nuclear fallout. The population has been segregated between the healthy and the abnormal survivors of the war. In the game you play a Zone Raider, one of the last surviving factions that has enough strength to face off against the ECO. Your missions vary depending on what the rebel forces need. It might be retrieving a part for an attack jet, or a hostage rescue. The missions change, as do the tracks that you must navigate in order to find your target and accomplish your mission, but a few things stay the same. The enemies that you face are a melange of mechanized and semi-automatic defense systems that carry an arsenal that any banana republic would be proud to own. Although the game is full of baddies, they can all be taken care of in nice order.

One of the key things to keep in mind about playing Zone Raiders is to proceed carefully. When you begin to rip around the corners and tear down the highways, you can miss a lot of opportunities to nail the bad guys from a safe

distance.

If you cycle through your weapons and drive around with the machine guns or the lasers selected, you can hit the sensors, and many other targets far beyond the range where they can see you. Usually these two are the best all-around weapons to use on the majority of the enemies. Also, they are the only two weapons whose repercussions will not harm you. All the rest will do damage to your vehicle at close range.

Another tactic is stealth. Because the enemy AI keys on the speed of your

vehicle, you can often sneak up on them without being detected, then just let 'em have it.

You can earn five different cars with which to attack the enemies and accomplish your missions: The Warbird is a modified T-Bird that handles fairly well and can handle a large weapons load-out. It's a good all-around vehicle for most missions. Next comes the Pickup Truck. This one is heavily armored and can take quite a beating before giving out. Opt for this one in tight spaces. The maneuverability is more limited



In this track, two Auto-Rovers have come flashing down the track to nail you. The Red and black box on the right guardrail is a passive sensor that allows the enemy to keep track of you throughout the level. Blow it up.

**SOMETIMES
EVEN THE PROS
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Tips

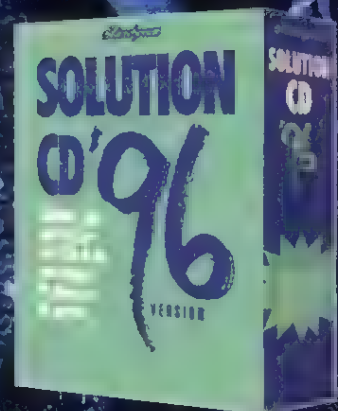
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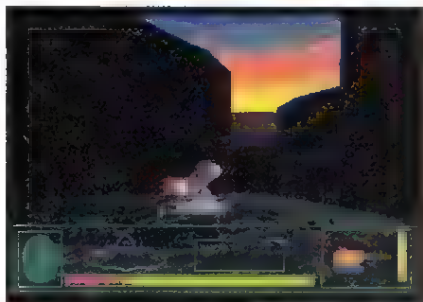
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STRATEGY

and the Pickup can't carry grenades at all. The Hammer falls into the third slot and can handle almost any mission—it's the heavy hitter of the game until you can get a hold of the X-Car Prototype. The Hammer has the limitations of not being able to carry the plasma cannon, and it is generally not as fast as the Warbird. The Fusion Coupe is another fast car, lightly armored like the Warbird. It should be used in the wide open missions. Taking up the final slot is the X-Car Prototype. This is the most versatile car in the inventory. Here's why: Every facet of the car is modifiable. From the brakes to the shield strength, the user can adjust how the car handles, takes punishment, etc. The maximum allowable range of modifica-



The mortar launcher is one of the fast weapons that you have access to. Their impact is staggering. The mortars blow up, then the pieces search for enemies and blow up some more.

tion is determined by a point total for design that is based on a division of the total point value achieved on the levels. As you get farther into the game and achieve higher point totals on some levels, you can then set the modifications without having to trade off as much in other areas.

Weapons loadout is as follows.

The first weapon that you have is your laser, which you are never without. It is a rather handy weapon and packs a rather substantial wallop. Also, you can upgrade your lasers to fire with double intensity when you find a laser intensifier. The laser is an excellent weapon to drive around with, and can be selected quickly by the click of a button. When all of your other ammo. runs out, your lasers will still be there.

After you get past the first few turns in the first track, you will find the machine-gun. This weapon is just about the best all-around weapon to have while you're driving around. It can take turrets out from long distances—before they can range in on you—and they pack a serious punch. Both the lasers and the chain gun will not do peripheral



If you sneak up your enemies, you can get quite close before unloading on them with your arsenal. This type of turret is found mainly in the canyons and keys on the motion of your car.



concussion damage to your craft if you happen to waste a cop too close to your vehicle. Next comes the Plasma Gun. The Plasma Gun will take out almost all of the enemies on the first track with one or two shots. The Plasma Gun has a longer range than the laser. It's just about comparable to the MG and it will do concussion damage to your craft if you are too close to the affected area, so watch out! After the plasma gun, a player can find a grenade launcher. The range can be preset simply by holding



Sensors tell the enemy exactly where you are on the track. When there is an active sensor in your area, the time will continue to count down until the Guardian appears.

the trigger down and watching the attitude bar on the launcher to gauge the distance of the launch. Once launched, the main grenade explodes on impact with a hard surface, then launches several mini-grenades that again, blow up on impact. One word of caution, launch the grenades in the open, no caves or canyons until you get the hang of it. The blast from this weapon is about as bad as taking a missile hit head-on. Speaking of missiles, you can find two



different types of missiles in the game, Rockets, and Pitbulls. Rockets will generally lock onto a target when the crosshair turns red and then, as long as the target doesn't go anywhere very fast, will usually kill him. When the enemy AI becomes more advanced as in ECO Canyon, you need the Pitbulls. They are true fire-and-forget missiles that will lock onto a target and chase it down until it can kill it. The only way that a Pitbull can be taken out is if it is tricked into running into the ground or the side of a hill.

The very first enemy that you will come into contact with is a black box,

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STRATEGY

(usually on a guardrail) with red lights. This is a sensor. The sensors won't shoot at you until you have passed the first few tracks; however, these sensors tell the enemies where your car is and while they are active in a particular region of the track, the clock on your dashboard will continue to count down until the time reaches zero. At this point, the Guardian will appear. The Guardian is a large red and white flying saucer that always knows where you are. It will circle your craft from above and dodge your shots until it kills you, which it usually does with lightning speed.

Among the other enemies that you will run into are the Auto-Rovers. A-R's carry lasers, that's it. They have weak defenses and are generally not too bright. Take them out with the MG, it's got the longest range. A-R's are worth 50 points. Next come the Rammers. Rammers are loaded with Plasma Cannons and their main tactic is to surprise you and then ram you off the road. They have medium strength defenses and are worth 80 points. Zone-Cops, (right), are a big problem in the beginning levels. They are armed with rockets and have a medium/high defense level. Z-C's are worth 60 points apiece. After you have whetted your appetite on a few Cops, try your luck against the Enforcers. They carry rockets, like the Cops, but they have a higher defense value and will follow you no matter where you run to. Enforcers are worth 100 points and can be taken out with Pitbulls most easily.

Now comes the heavy hitter, the Mangler. Manglers will hurl huge Hunks of Lead at you from their onboard projectile launchers, they are fast and have heavy armor. They like to

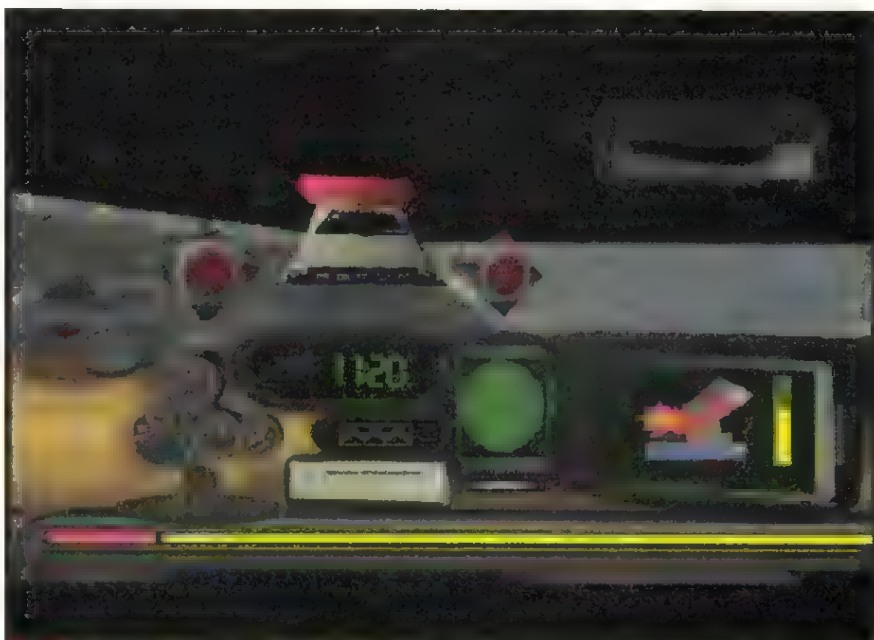
ram your car at high speed and then pummel you with their metallic mayhem. They are worth 125 points and are easily attacked by any weapons, but the best one is the Plasma Gun at medium range. After the Mangler, there is the Aerobug. It looks like an older Macintosh mouse but it can really mess up your day. It carries the Plasma Cannon and can travel at high speeds and maneuver around corners quickly. It has high defenses so should best be taken out with either the missiles or the grenades. Last on the list of badguys in the first three levels is the Boss, or "Mother". You'll recognize it. They launch grenades and are sneaky. The best way to deal with one is either to sneak up on them and let loose with rockets, or if you have already blown



An overhead view will help you to spot enemies past rises in the road and over the edges of the unfinished highways.

the element of surprise, get in close so that the grenades will fly over you, then take him out with lasers or MG bullets. Have fun with Zone Raiders.

— Scott Gehrs



These are the Zone Cops, they're fast and well defended. Don't worry about them pulling you over though, they'll just kill you. They carry rockets that will turn you inside out, but they can be taken out nicely with the right toy.

Weapons of Mass Destruction

From left to right are the Pitbulls, Projectile Launcher and the Mortars of Death. Lots of bang for the buck.

The Pitbulls are true fire-and-forget missiles that once locked onto an enemy are hard to shake. They will circle until they kill the target. Oh, yes the enemies have them too. They can be brought down by maneuvering a hill or other large solid object between you and them. Several enemies use Pitbulls, and when you've been targeted, you'll know it.

The Projectile Launcher actually hurls what are known as HOL, or Hunks of Lead at your enemy that will explode on impact and really mess up even heavy armor. The Mangler hurls chunks at you rather quickly, so be careful not to get in front of them. They can be avoided by siding left or right.



These are some of the weapons that you'll need to defeat the ECO. They all carry lots of high explosives, so be careful not to launch them at close range. It'll hurt.

Last but not least, the Mortars of Death cannot be overlooked. They can be launched like grenades but on impact, the fragments seek out another enemy, fly to it, and glom onto it like ants to honey. Then they blow up again. Don't worry, the enemies have them too! Nasty, eh?

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GAME OVER MechWarrior 2

The Wolves run, aided by the Kell Hounds...

The call to battle seemed almost too easy. Justify my honor by defeating Dwilt Radick in battle, then mop up the Wolf Clan's ground vehicles. Then I read the battle orders more closely: "identify" was the operative word throughout. ID missions are the sworn enemy of the Warrior, as he must turn his attention from destruction to inspection. This means close quarter fighting, and for that you must forego the obvious advantage of heavy armor and a large BattleMech in favor of speed. Factor in the remaining forces of Galaxy Commander Radick's 16th, as well as some miscellaneous 'Mechs from the Inner Sphere's Kell Hounds, and you have a battle worthy of Kerensky himself. The Keshik would be watching closely, and for that reason I chose to fight alone. No other Warriors would join me in this final battle to file the teeth of the Wolf.

The 'Mech that those idiots down in tactical had prepared for me wouldn't last a single minute in combat against the combined forces of the 16th and the Hounds. Dwilt Radick loves the feeling of authority that comes from piloting a Dire Wolf, even though it is slow. The Kells are fond of the faster Battlemaster. I knew I was in for it from the moment



The Wolf will honor the memory of Galaxy Commander Dwilt Radick even as they fear the talons of the Falcon.

default 'Mech, a Timber Wolf, but I rearranged the weapons loadout to include two large ER lasers and two medium pulse lasers. For good measure, I also loaded a single LRM-5 in case I came up against any unarmored turrets. The weapons and ammo were loaded on the sides of my chassis, and I loaded on as many heat sinks as I could fit on the remaining critical spots.

Upon entering the fray, the tanks and gunships were my first priority. The tanks have slow-swiveling turrets, and so are little threat when firing at a target that is not approaching them in a straight line. The gunships have a high reload time. Thirty seconds were all they lasted under the glare of my combined lasers.

A Dire Wolf was approaching at the best speed it could attain. This had to be Radick, and my inspection proved this. I wasted no time in removing

Battlemaster that was already firing at me. The pilot in this 'Mech was too good to be a standard jock; I quickly ID'd him as Colonel Kell, the master of the Hounds. He died with honor in less than a minute, while Radick's Dire Wolf fell only ten seconds later to massive damage to his 'Mech's remaining leg.

Now was the time to chase down the retreating vehicles. Precious minutes raced by as I caught up with them, quickly targeting, identifying and destroying each vehicle in turn. As the last three vehicles raced toward their dropship in the distance, a second Kell Battlemaster and a Jenner powered up and started advancing on my position. All were dispatched quickly and efficiently, as were the two gun emplacements guarding the Wolf dropship. With its duties nullified, the dropship left the field posthaste. Savoring my vic-



The legs are a 'Mech's weakness. Exploit it.



Colonel M. F. Kell himself defends the fleeing Wolf.



Target and identify each vehicle before destroying it.

COMPUTER GAME REVIEW

March, 1996
Volume 5, Issue 8

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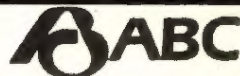
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Computer Game Review (ISSN 1085-847X) is published monthly by Sendai Publishing Group, Inc., 1920 Highland Avenue, Suite 222, Lombard, IL 60148. Second Class Postage Paid at Lombard, IL and additional mailing offices. Subscription rates for the U.S.: \$26.95, Canada and Mexico: \$48.95, and all others by mail only: \$103.95. Single issue rate: \$7.95. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Computer Game Review, P.O. Box 1462, Lombard, IL 60148-8462. For subscription changes, change of address, or correspondence concerning subscriptions, write Computer Game Review, P.O. Box 1462, Lombard, IL 60148-8462 or call Customer Service at (708) 268-2498. The editors and publisher are not responsible for unsolicited materials. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved herein, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without the prior written notice of the publisher. Copyright © 1995 Sendai Publishing Group, Inc. All rights reserved. All materials listed in this publication are subject to manufacturer's changes and the publisher assumes no responsibility for such changes.™ and © for products and the characters contained therein are owned by the companies who market or license those products. Printed in the U.S.A.

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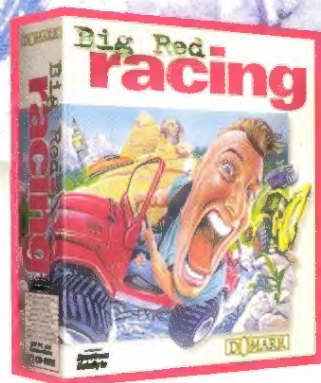
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